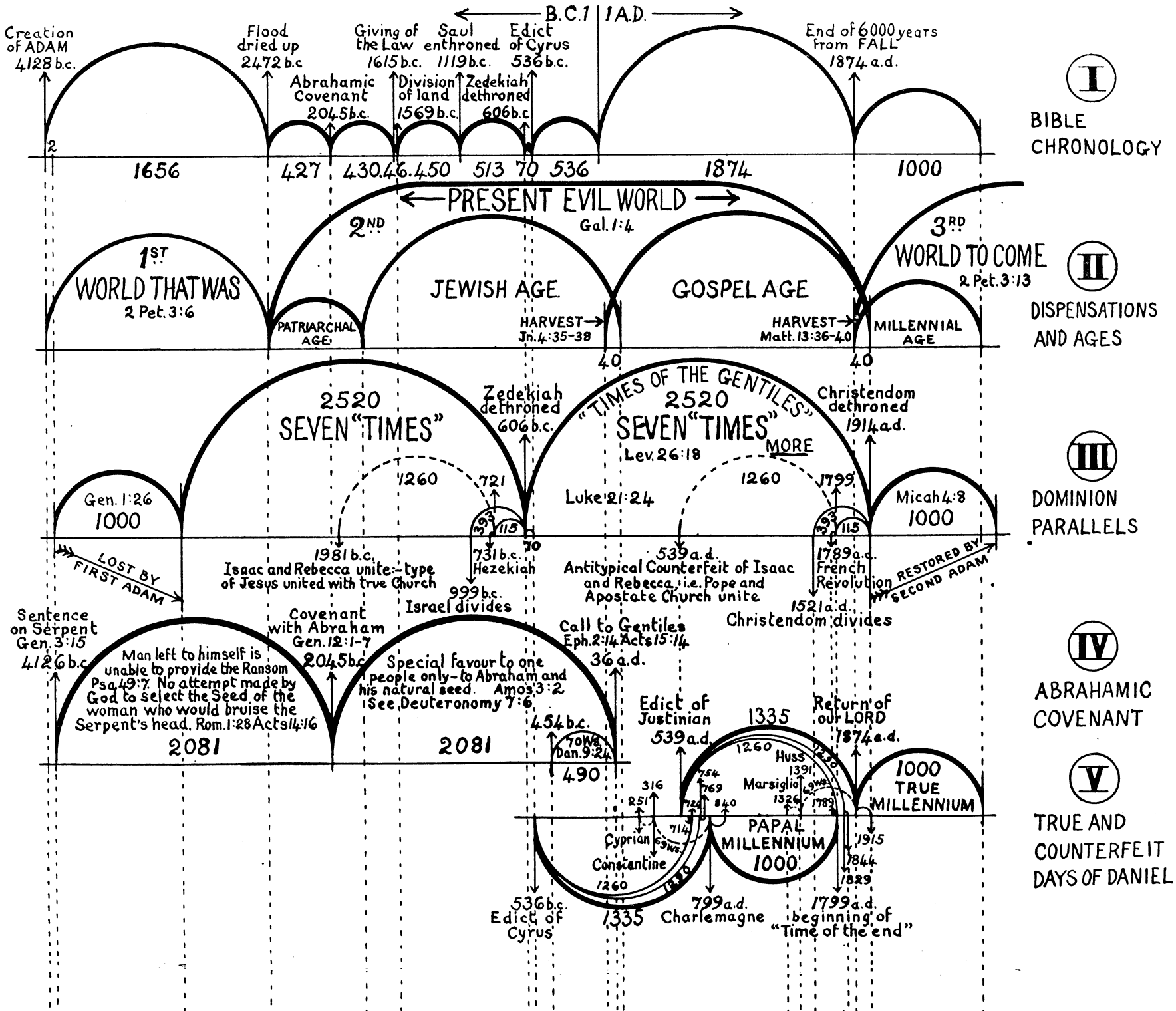
Souvenir Report

Of the

Manchester

Convention.

1906-1907.


B.C. 1 A.D.
Creation of ADAM 4128 b.c.
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Zedekiah dethroned 606 b.c.
2
1656
427
430.46.450
513
70
536
1874
1000
I
BIBLE CHRONOLOGY
PRESENT EVIL WORLD
Gal. 1:4
1ST WORLD THAT WAS
2 Pet. 3:6
2ND
JEWISH AGE
GOSPEL AGE
3RD WORLD TO COME
2 Pet. 3:13
PATRIARCHAL AGE
HARVEST
Jn. 4:35-38
HARVEST
Matt. 13:36-40
MILLENNIAL AGE
40
40
II
DISPENSATIONS AND AGES
2520 SEVEN "TIMES"
Zedekiah dethroned 606 b.c.
"TIMES OF THE GENTILES"
2520 SEVEN "TIMES"
Lev. 26:18
MORE
Christendom dethroned 1914 a.d.
Gen. 1:26
1000
1260
721
393
115
70
Luke 21:24
1260
1799
393
115
Micah 4:8
1000
III
DOMINION PARALLELS
LOST BY FIRST ADAM
1981 b.c.
Isaac and Rebecca unite:- type of Jesus united with true Church
731 b.c.
Hezekiah
999 b.c.
Israel divides
539 a.d.
Antitypical Counterfeit of Isaac and Rebecca, i.e. Pope and Apostate Church unite
1789 a.d.
French Revolution
RESTORED BY SECOND ADAM
1521 a.d.
Christendom divides
Sentence on Serpent Gen. 3:15
4126 b.c.
Man left to himself is unable to provide the Ransom Psa. 49:7. No attempt made by God to select the Seed of the woman who would bruise the Serpent's head. Rom. 1:28 Acts 14:16
2081
Covenant with Abraham Gen. 12:1-7
2045 b.c.
Special favour to one people only - to Abraham and his natural seed. Amos 3:2 See Deuteronomy 7:6
2081
Call to Gentiles Eph. 2:14 Acts 15:14
36 a.d.
454 b.c.
70 Wks
Dan. 9:24
490
IV
ABRAHAMIC COVENANT
Edict of Justinian 539 a.d.
1335
1260
Huss 1391
Marsiglio 1326
Return of our LORD 1874 a.d.
1260
1000 TRUE MILLENNIUM
316
251
754
769
724
840
Cyprian
Constantine
714
PAPAL MILLENNIUM 1000
1915
1844
1829
1260
1335
536 b.c.
Edict of Cyrus
799 a.d.
Charlemagne
1799 a.d.
beginning of "Time of the end"
V
TRUE AND COUNTERFEIT DAYS OF DANIEL

536 b.c. Edict of Cyrus

1335

799 a.d. Charlemagne

1799 a.d. beginning of "Time of the end"

IX

430 YEARS IN EGYPT?
EX. 12:40,41, R.V.

Levi 97 | Jochebed 253 | Moses 80

133 | 137 | 80

Kohath | Amram

Gen. 46:8-11. Ex. 6:16-20. Num. 26:59
Gen. 41:46-54. Gen. 45:6-9
Acts 7:20-30. Ex. 7:7
Deut. 34:7

VI

JEWISH DOUBLE PARALLELS

Jacob's death 1813 b.c.

Crucifixion Zech. 9:9,12 Apl. 33 a.d.

Baptism Oct. 29 a.d.

Favour ends Oct. 36 a.d.

Birth Oct. 2 b.c.

Overthrow Oct. 69

1845

405 b.c. Temple built 521-17

7 ws. 69 Ws.

536 Edict of Cyrus

454 Nehemiah

70th Week

467 Ezra

"DOUBLE" Jer. 16:18

1845

Berlin Congress 1878 a.d. Isa. 40:2 margin

Return Oct. 1874

Cast off Oct. 1881 a.d.

Miller 1844

Overthrow Oct. 1914 a.d.

Printing 1440

Marsiglio 1324-8

7 ws. 69 Ws.

1309 Avignon

1391 Huss

1378 Wyclif

1000

VII

FOUR EMPIRES PARALLEL

1813 b.c.

FLESHLY "HOUSE"

1845

"TIMES OF THE GENTILES"

33 a.d.

1878 a.d.

SPIRITUAL "HOUSE"

1845

606 Babylon

536 Medo-Persia

336-24 Greece

197 b.c. Rome

70 a.d.

1509-21 Luther

1309 Avignon

1648 Westphalia

1915

VIII

REST AND RESTITUTION

SIXTH "DAY" 7000

GOD'S REST

SEVENTH "DAY" 7000

Gen. 2:2. Heb. 4:9-11

"EVENING" 3500

"MORNING" 3500

2500

1846 Enter land Lev. 25:2

ANTITYPICAL CYCLE 50x50

2500

1846

4128 b.c.

1ST FIRST ADAM'S DAY 1000

3127

2473

654

19 JUBILEES OBSERVED 19x50=950

654

Oct. 29 a.d.

1875

7TH LAST ADAM'S DAY 1000

1000

Deut. 11:21

2

THE FALL BY FIRST ADAM Matt. 7:13

FALL

3126 b.c.

Typical baptism 1 Pet. 3:20,21

1575 b.c

627 b.c. Typical Sabbath year

b.c. 626 Last typical Jubilee year

Baptism of Jesus

Col. 2:16,17

RESTITUTION BY LAST ADAM Isa. 35:8

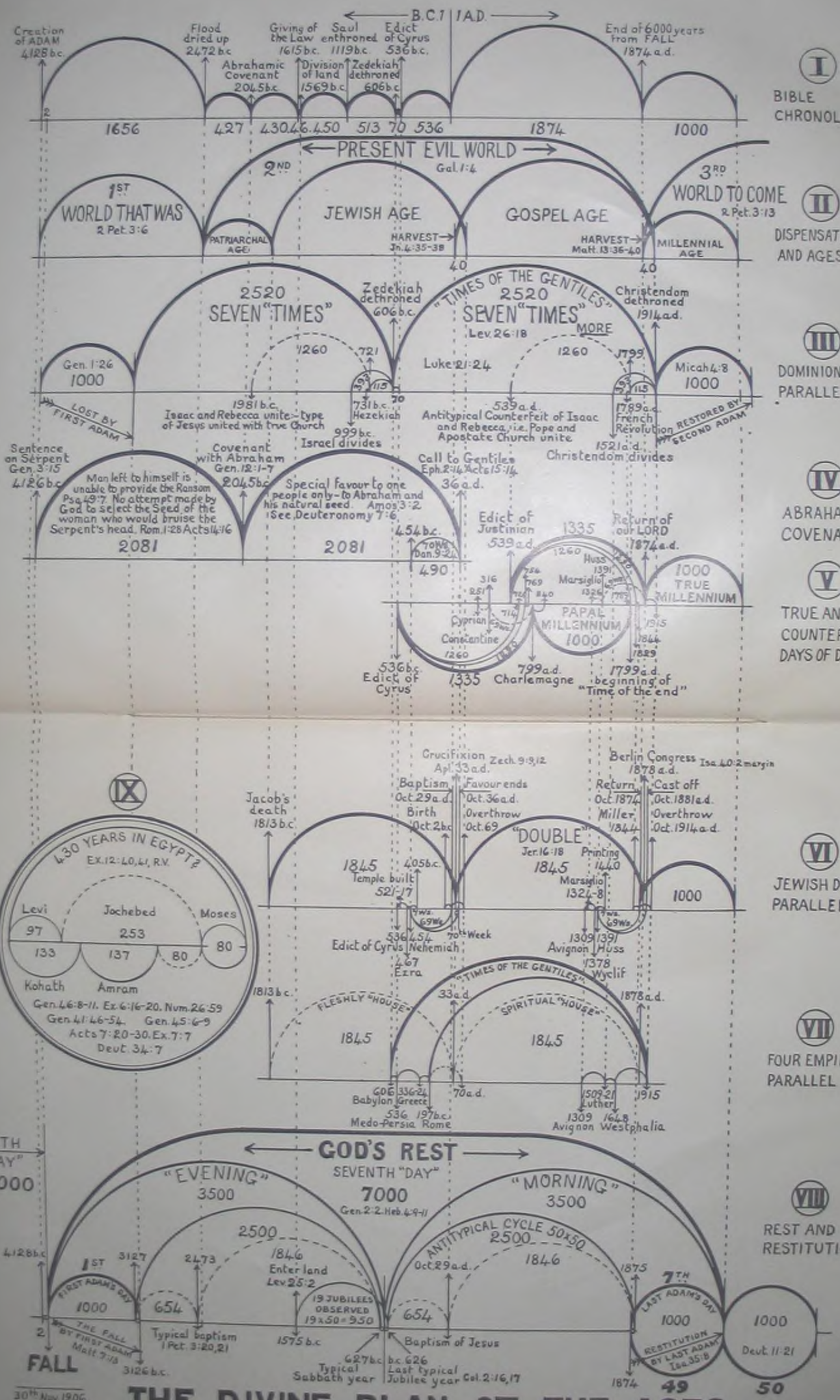
1874

49

50

30th Nov. 1906.

THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES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FALL
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30th Nov. 1906.
THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES

Souvenir Report of the Manchester Convention.

December 30th and 31st, 1906, January 1st and 2nd, 1907.

This report of the Convention of Believers in the Ransom for all, held at Manchester, England, is published at the request of many of the Brethren who were present and expressed themselves as desirous of possessing a permanent souvenir of the Convention, partly for themselves, partly for lending or giving to their friends.

If the readers gain as much pleasure and spiritual profit from their study of this report as I have, I shall feel amply rewarded for my labour of love.

It will be noticed that the dominant note of all the discourses is the honour and praise of our **Lord Jesus** to the glory of God the Father.

One of Brother HEMERY'S addresses has been unavoidably omitted, as no report of it was made.

A Chart of the Time-prophecies* has been included in the report for the better understanding of Brother EDGAR'S discourse on "Rest and Restitution."

It will be noticed that an address delivered by Brother BARTON at the Glasgow Convention (September, 1906) has been included, also a reply to an "Anglo-Israelite," which may be of interest.

Special thanks are due to the Sister who so kindly reported the lectures in shorthand and later transcribed them, and to the various speakers for kindly correcting the reports of their own discourses.

May the Lord bless this effort to show forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his marvellous light!

Yours in the service of the Truth,

Morton Edgar,
224, West Regent Street, Glasgow, Scotland.

June, 1907.

The Subjects of the Addresses are:

"**Why did God give us a Bible so difficult to understand?**" *By Brother B. H. Barton (Pilgrim) Philadelphia, Pa. U.S.A.*

"**Our Confidence.**" *By Brother Fred. Guard, London.*

"**Crossing Jordan; Passing of the Priests.**" *By Brother J. J. Bilsbrough, Warrington.*

"**The Preciousness of Christ.**" *By Brother Wm. W. Johnston, Glasgow.*

"**Our Present Resurrection in Christ.**" *By Brother J. Hemery (Representative of "Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society"), London.*

"**Socialism and the Bible.**" *By Brother John Edgar, Glasgow.*

"**There is Another King.**" *By Brother James Hay, Liverpool.*

"**Rest and Restitution.**" *By Brother John Edgar, Glasgow.*

"**A Reply to an Anglo-Israelite.**"

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* Copies of this Chart may be had in **Three** sizes: (1) **Large "Wall" Chart,** 18″ by 12″, printed on stout art paper and bound top and bottom with brass. Price two and a half pence (five cents) each. (2) **"Dawn" Size Chart,** 7″ by 4½″, printed on stiff card, can be used as book mark. Price sixpence (twelve cents) per dozen. (3) **Post Card Charts,** for correspondence. Price one shilling (twenty-four cents) per fifty. The above prices include postage.

PYRAMID BOOKLET. SECOND EDITION.

The contents of this edition have been rearranged, and explanatory matter in connection with each "time" feature has been added, making the booklet more complete. Like the first edition it contains a coloured chart mounted on cloth, showing the Pyramid Passages and their measurements. Bound in cloth. Price, including postage, tenpence (twenty cents) each.

Why did God give us a Bible so difficult to understand?

By Brother B. H. Barton.

THE text on which we will base at least a portion of our remarks to-night, is found in Isaiah LV, 8-11. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Many are the questions which have been aroused by religious thought, and numerous are the answers, speculative, scientific and philosophical which have been given to those questions, and yet we realize that the only authoritative answer to any religious question is that from the inspired Word of God, even though the philosophical or the scientific reply may confirm what the Bible states. But we have before us a question which finds no speculative answer, a question that neither philosophy nor science has ever yet answered. If it is to have an answer at all, we must get that answer from God's Holy Word.

Why did God give us a Bible so difficult to understand? Why did he not make it plainer and simpler? When we read a newspaper article or any of the books in general circulation, one of us does not get one idea from it, and another another but we all obtain the same thought from it, and yet a **man** was the author. Dear friends, if men can write books and edit newspapers so clearly and so simply that everybody can understand them, how much more could God have done so! He could have given us a Bible that would have been so clear that there could not have been two opinions based upon it. Why He has not done this, is a question that everyone of us must have thought something about. It might seem to you that it is a very bold thing that I should stand up here and endeavour to answer that question, but, my dear friends, I want you to understand that **I believe this question can be answered** not because I and others in this day are wiser or better than other men, and not because we have some new revelation, but **because we have some new truth from the old revelation.**

When some hundred years ago the Lord used Martin Luther in such a noble way, it was not because there had not been so grand a Christian as Martin Luther before. It was not because he was more pious than other men, nor because he had given more study to God's Word than others had, but it was because the time had come for certain truths to be made plain, and Martin Luther in God's sight was a fitting instrument for that work.

Luther did not add anything to the Bible, but he was permitted to throw wondrous light upon certain statements in it that had always been there. You recall our Saviour's reply nineteen hundred years ago to the Pharisees when they asked him why he would not forbid the people crying out "Hosanna to the son of David!" He said:—"If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out" (Luke XIX, 40). Why was that? Because the time had come when the prophetic statement relative to that cry (Zechariah IX, 9) was due to be fulfilled, and if there had been no man or child to fulfil it, God could have seen to it that its fulfilment would have been accomplished in some way. We see the same thing with regards to Luther's day.

The time had come for certain truths to be revealed from among the rubbish of the theological errors of the **dark ages.** Had some man not declared them, God could have arranged that the very stones would have spoken and declared the message.

And so, dear friends, we believe that in God's providence **the day has arrived when certain truths, long hidden in God's Word, are to be perceived by a certain class;** and we believe that our Heavenly Father has not chosen us because there are no better Christians than we in the world, nor because we are wiser or more worthy, but because he evidently saw that some of us would be suitable instruments, prompt to receive these things that are found in the Old Word. We do not suppose that our Saviour chose those fishermen for his disciples because there were no better or wiser people than they in the world, but because in his wisdom he saw they would be the best fitted for his purpose.

There is yet another point, dear friends, before we proceed with our subject. **Your faith in God's Word is on trial.** We are inclined sometimes to think hastily that almost everybody has faith in God's Word. If we use the word faith in the sense in which it is used in the Scriptures, there is far less faith in God's Word than the majority believe or than we could wish. Our talk will enable you to gauge to some extent the measure and the strength and the intensity of your faith.

Suppose I should bring to your attention some truth, some statement of Scripture that you had failed to appreciate heretofore, and suppose that that statement of Scripture presents an idea contrary to what you have previously believed, suppose it is different from what your friends and relatives believe, suppose furthermore it is different from what your denomination supports, and is thoroughly contradictory to many of the views which the minister you have so long honoured has presented to you, what will you do, dear friends? Will you say:—"My strength is in God's Word and I am going to hold to that truth, though I have to resign some long cherished thoughts, some of the thoughts that have been held by my parents and forefathers, some ideas that have long been considered the settled ideas and fundamental principles of orthodoxy." Or would you rather say:—"Well it does seem as if that statement were Scriptural, but if I should accept that, it would inevitably separate me, in a religious sense at least, from many of those that have been near and dear to me, and it would cause me to reject the views that my forefathers and my minister have treasured. I cannot accept it."

We all realize that high in the heavens there is a God of glory, a God who is the fountain of all that is good and the source of every blessing present and future, and we equally realize that upon this earth there is a race of beings that are just as inglorious as He is glorious, who experience more or less of sorrow and affliction, trials and perplexities. Possibly if we lived a life here that was free from pain and difficulties, free from everything that would make life unpleasant, we might give very little thought to the future. But we are compelled to look forward and wonder—**"If there is so much of sorrow and trouble in this life, is it possible that there can be more in the life to come, or is it possible there may not be any life to come at all?"**

No man can give an answer to these questions. God **alone** can tell us whether or not there is a life beyond. Not only so, but if that life is one of joy or one of sorrow, if it is a life on a higher plane or merely a continuation on the plane upon which we have lived and had our experiences here, God alone can reveal these things to us.

It would seem that since our Heavenly Father has endowed us with reason, he would grant us a revelation which would satisfy that reason. **That is exactly what God has done in his WORD.**

But if no revelation had come from God and if we were given to understand that a day was coming when he could grant such a revelation, it is very likely that we might speculate as to what kind of a book God would give us. We should probably think that since men have written such wonderful books, God's book would be more wonderful still, and that he would employ

angels from heaven to write this wonderful book that would commit to us this wonderful revelation. We could also imagine that possibly it would be so written that every man could read it in his own language, and that everything would be so simple and clear, that though there might be a little doubt about the meaning of what a man would write, there would be no doubt about the meaning of what God would write.

We might be inclined even to think that God would have a halo round it so that men would immediately say:—"Oh that is one of God's books for no man could put a halo round a book." It might be that in this book there would be miraculous properties so that if a sick person were to touch it, the sickness would leave him. There might even be in each book a miraculous pocket so that if a man felt impelled to go somewhere and preach the Gospel, he would not require first to go round and take up a collection to defray expenses, but if it were the Lord's will, he would always find in the pocket the money to pay the fare. We might well imagine also that if a man should say a word against that book, he would drop dead on the instant. What a wonderful book we should be inclined to imagine God's revelation would be; and yet after we had got through with speculation we would say to ourselves on further study:—"No, no, that is the kind of book we would have anticipated this revelation to be, but God's ways are not our ways, his thoughts are not our thoughts, and very likely if God should give us a revelation it would be an entirely different kind of book from that." And this, dear friends, is exactly what we do find.

Instead of finding the Bible written by pure and holy angels we find it was very weak and imperfect men God used in its writing. Not only so, but instead of finding that when a man speaks against this Word he drops dead, men have received immense sums for lecturing on the lines of infidelity. Instead of a halo over the book, we go to many homes and the only halo we find is a dusty one. **Instead of finding that everyone in all the earth has got a Bible, we find that there are nearly seven hundred million people that do not know that such a book exists,** and of these millions that do know only a small proportion of them have copies, and of those that have copies only another small proportion are deeply interested in what it contains, while among those who are deeply interested and do frequently come to God's Word, what confusion exists! One says it teaches this thing, another says it teaches that thing, and a third says it teaches something entirely different. Consequently we realize that there is not a book in the world written by men, that has such confusion connected with its interpretation as is found to-day among Christian people generally, with respect to God's Word. Surely it is an entirely different kind of book from what we would imagine God would give to his creatures, and yet it must have been that this was the best way. As our text says:—"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, &c."

And yet someone might enquire—"I do not see how that could be the best kind of a revelation. How much easier it would have been, how much more effective, if all these mysterious, dark and confusing passages had been eliminated, and in their place clear plain passages had been inserted. How much better it would have been, how much more readily the world might have been converted."

It must be that there has been some great mistake. It is evidently a fact that something has been misunderstood. What can it be? Is it possible that our Heavenly Father is not interested in the conversion of the world? Is it possible that he does not care whether many or few are converted? We reply on the contrary, **our Heavenly Father has vastly more interest in the conversion of the world than you or I.** Remember how he said that he is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter III, 9). Recall his statement:—"I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked" (Ezekiel XXXIII, 11). Recall our Saviour's words along that same line informing us that not even a sparrow falls without our Father's notice, and then how he added:—"Are ye not of more value than many sparrows?" It does seem confusing however. Here we have statements in God's Word that he is desirous that sinners should be converted. Nevertheless, we see to-day men doing so much for the conversion of the world, sacrificing time and earthly interest to do all they can towards its conversion, labouring to find missionaries to send into the foreign field, labouring to raise the sums of money necessary to support these missionaries,—yet think of what the Father says,—that all the gold and silver is his and the cattle upon a thousand hills. God could have raised the money necessary for the sending out of these missionaries. He could have raised up a sufficiency of missionaries to accomplish this work. What is the meaning of it all? It is not because God has not more interest in the conversion of the heathen than you or I, but obviously because **men have misunderstood the Heavenly Father's purpose.**

It must have seemed very hard to those Pharisees nineteen hundred years ago when Jesus came and informed them, that their ideas had been all wrong when they had been thinking to obtain life through the keeping of the Law, that their efforts had been in vain so far as salvation was concerned, and that it would be necessary for them to give up their old beliefs, and recognise their fallen and sinful condition, and accept **him** as the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. While we regret that they had not the courage to take a bolder and nobler stand for what was truth, we cannot help but realize to some extent what that must have been to them. The same thing was true in the days of Martin Luther. It must have been indeed a trying thing, especially for those Catholic priests and theologians, to have a man like Luther stand up and declare that they had misunderstood the testimony of God's Word, that whereas they claimed it was their system, it was in reality the blood of Jesus Christ, that made the salvation of all men possible. We can realize that **it required a large measure of courage and humility to make a bold stand for the truth,**

And so, dear friends, we shall not be at all surprised (we shall, indeed, feel sympathy with them) if there be any who do not like the idea of having misunderstood God's plans and purposes, and refuse to believe his Word. It is natural to desire that all we have understood in the past might be confirmed, rather than accept God's truth if this mean the sweeping away of all we previously believed. But the fact remains that **we have misunderstood the plans and purposes of God. It must be so or else there is no answer to this question** "Why did God give us a Bible so difficult to understand."

The special **misunderstanding** of God's Word is the idea that has been so long held and taught, that the purpose of the last nineteen hundred years has been **the conversion of the world of mankind.** This may astound some of you. Some of you will say:—"Why! if the past nineteen hundred years have not been for the purpose of converting the world, what have they been for?" Dear friends, when we get through to-night we trust that you will see that the conversion of the world which God intends to bring about, is far more glorious than has ever entered into the minds of those who have contemplated the world's conversion in **this** Age.

(1) In the first place, **we do not believe the Lord has been trying to convert the world for the past nineteen hundred years BECAUSE THE WORLD IS NOT CONVERTED.** We read:—"My word shall not return unto me void but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah LV, 11). The fact that God's Word has not converted the world is an evidence that God has not sent it **yet** to convert the world. Indeed, **God never tries to do a thing, but he does it.**

Why did God give us a Bible so difficult to understand?

As we look around us and see how far from being converted the world is to-day, we would have to exclaim:—"If our Heavenly Father's purpose in the Gospel Age has been the conversion of the world, surely he is not the all-powerful Being that revelation and reason declare him to be."

(2) Another reason why we understand **the work of the past nineteen hundred years has not been the conversion of the world,** is that **the Lord's Word tells us so, very plainly.** See Acts XXVIII, 25-27—" . . . . Well spake the Holy Spirit . . . . unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: &c." Our Saviour referred to this same quotation from Isaiah in two different places,—John XII, 36-44—"While ye have light, believe in the light, &c." Matthew XIII, 13-17. In the previous portion of this chapter in Matthew's Gospel some of the disciples are reported to have asked Jesus why he spake in parables. His answer is given in verse 13:—"**Therefore** spake I to them in parables: because they seeing see not: and hearing they hear not, &c." **He did not want them to understand.** Had he spoken plainly, everyone would have understood. Our Saviour did not say that all those who did not see these wonderful things were wicked. **He reminded his disciples that righteous men and prophets had desired to see these things,** but the Heavenly Father had kept them hidden till four thousand years had passed, and now Jesus was come to bring some of these things to light, but not in such a way that all could understand them. Only a few simple fishermen grasped the significance of what he said (Matthew XIII, 16, 17; I Corinthians I, 26-29).

(3) A third reason why we believe that **God has not been attempting the conversion of the world during this Gospel Age** is that, **THE BIBLE POINTS TO AN AGE STILL FUTURE FOR THIS PURPOSE** (see Diagram No. II in Chart). In Isaiah VI, 9-11 we find this prophecy to which our Lord and his disciples referred—"Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not, &c." I want you to notice the context. In verse 11 is Isaiah's question:—"How long will this be so?" and the Lord's answer:—"Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate." In other words, dear friends, we understand that **this Age is to be brought to a close by a great time of trouble and distress,** and until then there would be many who would hear and see these things without being able to grasp their significance. The Age for earth's conversion is coming, but it has not come yet. Again, you remember in Zephaniah III, 8, 9 the Lord says—"For my determination is to gather the nations that I may assemble the kingdoms to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For **then** will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." This great time of trouble is everywhere put as one of the things that is to precede the great time of blessing and world-wide conversion.

(4) There is a fourth reason. **We understand this age is not for the conversion of the world because of many of the statements that were made by our Lord Jesus and his inspired apostles.** On one occasion as recorded in Matthew XI, 25—"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the **wise** and **prudent,** and hast revealed them unto babes." What was the method that God took for hiding these things? Was it by arranging that each of his faithful followers should have a Bible and no one else would be able to see it? No, he allows us to show it to whomsoever we will, but the way in which he hides it is by using in it such obscure language that only a certain class are able to appreciate these things. Jesus, instead of sorrowing because of this and saying:—"Oh! dear Father, I wish you had made your revelation plainer and clearer. If you had only told them I was coming as the Messiah, and made it so simple and clear that no one would have made a mistake; but instead, you have put one statement of my coming here, another there, and another somewhere else, and people do not believe when I tell them about these things. Why did you not put all so clearly that they could not doubt? Why did you not make a connected chapter or book of my life here?"—But no, **instead of Jesus being rebellious,** he rather said—"I **thank** thee that thou hast hid these things &c." That looked as though Jesus had the same thought and spirit in this matter as the Heavenly Father had, and was glad the Bible was not so plain as many would like to have it. Again, you remember how our Saviour, when he sent out his disciples, said:—"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, &c." (Matthew X, 5). This seems as though our Saviour was not specially mindful just then whether the good news reached the Gentiles or not. Why was this? Evidently the time had not come for the conversion of the world. We know it is true that in the days following our Saviour's resurrection he said to his disciples—"Go ye therefore and teach all nations" (Matthew XXVIII, 19). That this did not mean that the preaching of the Gospel was for the **conversion** of every individual, is evident, for when the Apostle Paul was minded to go into Asia, the Spirit forbade him (Acts XVI, 6-10). Some would say—"Does not the Scripture say that this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached to all nations, then shall the end come?" Yes, but there is another portion of this text which the majority generally omit. This is the phrase —"for a **witness**" (Matthew XXIV, 14). And we realize that if the Gospel of the Kingdom has not converted the world during the past 1900 years, it has done its witnessing.

If the work of this Age is not for the conversion of the world what is its object? Now we come to the point, and you will be able to realize how thoroughly God's Word has accomplished the purpose whereto he sent it, and the fact that it has been given in such an obscure form is one of the things that has enabled the Lord to accomplish the purpose he had in mind.

Many when they have heard that this was the Word of God, have thought very little further about the matter. Others have said—"If this is God's Word, I want to know something about what is in it. If the things that men write are so valuable, how much more is that which God can tell me"—and he goes to the Bible and is surprised to find it such a strange book. He reads about all kinds of strange things—about wheels within wheels, about wonderful creatures with four faces, one like an eagle, another like a lion (Ezekiel X, 9-14), and he says—"Well I cannot think what they can mean." Possibly he turns to another portion and reads there about the little particulars to which the Israelites had to attend, as they travelled through the wilderness, and he says—"Is not that strange and peculiar? Why has God put such things into the Bible?" **Many say there is no use trying to find anything out of that book;** and though they might still consider it the Word of God they pay but little attention to it. Another class think—"This is God's Word, and he has put those things in there for a purpose. **When the due time comes, if God sees I need the light from those passages, he will see that I get it.** I know that if I purchase a gold mine, I would not expect to find all the gold lying upon the surface ready to pick up. I would expect to dig for it. This is God's gold mine, and I am going to dig as the Master advocated, dig as for hidden treasure" (Matthew XIII, 44). He begins to dig and soon finds that men have held false ideas about God's Word, and he finds some of the nuggets brought from this mine bring him a measure of unpopularity. Some are afraid and prefer to believe the things that are popular about the Word of God. They say—"If the rulers say this I will believe it" (John VII, 48; XII, 42, 43). Others would say—"No, no, if I get from this gold mine that God has given me, a nugget of truth, I am

going to stand up for and proclaim that truth even though it brings unpopularity.

And so we find, then, the very fact that the truth has to be dug for, is one of the things that separates between those who are merely superficially loyal to the Lord, and those who are heartily loyal to him.

We realise that to-day, if the Word of God was free from mysteries and obscure statements, there would be no cause for any of us to stand up for it. There would be no unpopular truths. All Christian people would be teaching the same things, and it would be utterly impossible ever to prove our loyalty to the Lord, for where would be the opportunity to demonstrate it, or suffer anything for the cross of Christ? **If the Word of God had been simple, how much persecution would Jesus have received?** The Scripture says—"If they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (I Corinthians II, 8). The Apostle Peter remarked too—"I wot that through ignorance ye did it" (Acts III, 17, 18; Luke XXIII, 34); and is it not true that the Master himself looked down upon his murderers and said—"Father forgive them; for they know not what they do"? The very fact that the testimony concerning Jesus was given in such an obscure form, made the testing of his loyalty to the Heavenly Father possible, and made his sufferings possible.

It was the same with his disciples. If the Pharisees had understood the Word of God, do you think they would have persecuted those disciples? **It was the very obscurity of the truth as it began to be brought to light that tested the zeal and faithfulness of the followers of the Master all down the Age.** We see that God's Word is the thing that has enabled us to show how much we love him, how ready we are to sacrifice in the interest of what is revealed. But we see another class too who go to God's Word and find a measure of light there, and who have the courage to stand up for it even though it brings them reproach and persecution, but who begin to realize that there is a measure of honour to be obtained from the proclaiming of the truth of God's Word. Though it is unpopular, still it is pleasing to be engaged to some extent in such service. Even if the world do not honour them, still there is a little handful of the followers of the Master who will honour them. And so they serve the Lord not because of their love for him, but because of the individual honour they may get out of it. The very fact that the Word is so obscure enables them to be tested.

We see, then, that **there are several things necessary for the proper understanding of God's Word.** It is not only necessary that we dig as for hidden treasure, study with a will, but **our heart must be in the right attitude.** Unless it is, no matter how much we study the Word, we cannot get at the truth. We find, then, that it is this obscure form in which the Bible has been given, that has helped to develop the faithful ones of the past 1900 years. If the Bible had been simple, clear and plain from the beginning, we never would have had a Martin Luther or any of those noble heroes in the Reformation movement, and we rejoice that the obscurity of the Word of God has made possible the development of characters like those. While the truths that they proclaimed from the Bible were unpopular to the nominal Christian at that time, there are new truths being brought to light to-day which are just as unpopular to the nominal Christian of this time. The question is, whether we are going to stand on the side of the popular error, or on the side of the unpopular truth.

Some might be inclined to say—"Do you mean that the Lord does not care anything about the conversion of the world so long as he can develop this class of faithful Christians?" No, the Lord **is** interested in the conversion of the world; and the selection of this class of faithful Christians and their testing, is **not that the rest of the world may be lost but rather that they may be saved.** We have already referred to an Age during which there will be a wonderful world-wide conversion. Everybody who studies the Word can see many prophecies of that glad time.

That the conversion of the world was not to be during this Age is very clearly manifested from such statements as these—II Timothy III, 1—"in the last days perilous times shall come, &c." That does not look as if the world would be converted when the end of the Age arrives. Along the same line we hear the Apostle Peter say:—"There shall come in the last days scoffers, &c." (II Peter III, 3). That does not sound very much like the conversion of the world. We hear our Master say—"As it was **in the days** of Noah, so shall it be also **in the days** of the Son of man" (Luke XVII, 26). That does not sound like the conversion of the world either. **The Bible teaches that the world-wide conversion will be after not before the Lord's second coming.** Isaiah XXIX, 11-15—"The vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned saying, Read this I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed: and the book is delivered to him that is not learned saying, Read this I pray thee; and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men. Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, . . . for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent men shall be hid. Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, who seeth us? or who knoweth us?" How truly this describes the position of God's Word to-day. We take some of these dark mysterious passages to a man who is learned and he says—"I cannot tell." Then we take it to one who is not learned and say—"what do you think of this passage?" He replies—"I do not understand it, I am not learned." But now the prophet has some further thoughts for us. The 16th verse—"Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, he made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, he had no understanding?" **Is it possible that men have been unwittingly turning things upside down?** There are many important things of which this is true. Men have been giving us to understand that the world would be converted and **then** Christ would come. On the contrary, we have seen clearly that the world has not to be converted before Christ comes, but in the last days there shall be perilous times; men will be lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God (II Timothy III, 4). That is one truth that has been turned upside down. When that time arrives notice what will take place. In the 18th verse (Isaiah XXIX) we learn that when that Age has arrived, **when our Lord's Kingdom will be established in glory, it will no longer be true that men shall hear and not understand,** see and not perceive, but both in the natural and in the figurative sense "In that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. Verses 19 to 24:—The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, . . . for the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is comsumed, . . . that make a man an offender for a word, . . . and turn aside the just for a thing of nought. They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine." Someone might say—"I do not grasp that thought clearly. You say that after the Lord's coming he is going to bring to light the hidden things of his Word. But how will he do it. Will he give them a new Bible?" No, it will be by opening and unsealing the truths of the old Bible. **How clear and plain are the prophecies regarding our Lord's first advent and its work!** How has the Lord made them so clear to us? Is it by scoring

them out and making a new book, and putting the prophecies in their proper order? No, they still come in the same order. It is by enabling us to see the significance of those passages. They are no longer dark and mysterious even though they are scattered as much as ever. So, **after our Lord's second coming, he is going to show men the connection between all those mysterious things now in his Word, and the mysterious character of those things will be removed,** and no longer will God's Word be a book difficult to understand, but that will be the time when the knowledge of the Glory of the Lord shall cover the whole earth as the waters cover the sea (Habakkuk II, 14), and all shall know Him from the least unto the greatest (Jeremiah XXXI, 34). What a conversion that will need!

Then again we want you to notice that **the real object of the development and selection of those whom the Scripture terms collectively—the Church of Christ,** those who are willing to sacrifice and be faithful under the test of the unpopular truths of this Age as they are brought to light, **is that they are going to be the MISSIONARIES that will do the converting of the world in the Age which will follow this.** Many are inclined to say that it seems to be useless that the Lord should thus develop and test and select a little class of people during this past Age, and yet allow so large a number to go into the grave without a knowledge of the only name given under heaven or among men whereby we must be saved (Acts IV, 12).

But let us see the connection between the Church of this Age and the world that is to see the light in the following Age:—Our Saviour everywhere has made out **the Christian way to be very narrow.** You remember how he said:—"Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and **few** there be that find it" (Matthew VII, 14). **One of the things which make it a narrow way is the obscurity of the Word of God. Another is the unpopularity of the truth as it becomes due.** He that would follow the will of the Lord must not walk according to the course of this world (Ephesians II, 2). You remember, our Saviour on one occasion, speaking of the narrowness of the way, said—"It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God," —when his disciples asked: "Who then can be saved?" On still another occasion they said—"Lord, are there few that be saved?" (Luke XIII, 23). If the way is so narrow as that, there will not be very many saved. But the Master replied:—"The things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke XVIII, 24-27). **God in his wisdom has arranged in some way, that instead of few being saved, many shall be saved** (I Timothy II, 3, 4). But we find around us to-day, men and women realizing that if others are to be saved, it requires someone to carry the Gospel to them. How shall they believe without a preacher? (Romans X, 13, 14). They must have missionaries sent to them. Can men do much in that direction? Many missionaries have been sent and there still remain hundreds of millions who have not heard the first word about the Lord Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation. Furthermore, to all the host who have gone into the grave no missionaries have been sent. There is not a Church in Christendom prepared to gather money to send missionaries to all those who have died in heathen ignorance. We shall show you that **God has decided upon a wonderful missionary movement,** and that this missionary movement is not going to carry the Gospel to the living only, but also **to those who have died** without a knowledge of salvation.

You will remember it is mentioned in John I, 9—Jesus Christ "was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." We realize that it is only a few of all the millions who have come into the world that have yet been enlightened by the only "light," and if **all** are to be enlightened, it includes the host that have passed away as well as the living and those yet to be born.

Man's idea has been that **he** is to choose the missionaries, and build universities and seminaries to prepare those missionaries, and after they have had their instruction to send them forth to China and Africa to convert the host of heathen there. Dear friends, that is a mistake.

We find that in God's purpose he has decided to have some wonderful **missionaries;** but instead of allowing men to choose them **he had been choosing them himself;** instead of these missionaries being instructed in earthly schools and colleges **the Lord has been instructing them** (John VI, 44, 45); instead of only a year or two, **an entirely consecrated lifetime is required for their instruction.** This is part of the object of the present life in the case of every Christian man or Christian woman, to develop him and fit him to be with Jesus a member of that great missionary association that is going to accomplish earth's conversion in the Age to follow this.

You remember that on one occasion when the Apostle John had got well on in years and his work was nearly over, and after he had written messages to various churches, the Lord spoke a word of encouragement to him, saying:—John, "Thou must prophesy again (as though in a higher and greater sense) before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" (Revelations X, 11). Many think that possibly the only reference here, would be to the circulation of the book of Revelation, that it is only in that sense that John has been testifying to many nations. But we find now, that there is a higher sense in which John and all the faithful followers of the Master shall testify to the world.

When that wonderful Age comes, darkness will be scattered by the rays of the sun. You remember how, in Scripture, the past 6000-year period of sorrow and doubt, suffering and ignorance is often compared to a **night,** and this glorious time that is coming when God's Word shall no longer be a difficult Word, a misunderstood Word, is spoken of by contrast as a **morning.** Psalms XXX, 5—"For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: **weeping** may endure for a night, but **joy** cometh in the morning." If there is going to be a morning there will have to be a sun as it were to bring the light. And we would ask what is going to constitute the great sun that shall arise at that time? The sun of which we read in Malachi IV, 2—"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." We would realize that **Jesus is evidently the Sun of righteousness in the primary sense,** but our Saviour speaking to his followers on one occasion says:—"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the **sun** in the Kingdom of their Father" (Matthew XIII, 43). We would understand by this that that great time of light is to be ushered in by the rays of the sun of righteousness, and that **the Sun of righteousness means not only Jesus but the faithful followers of Jesus as well.** You remember the statement of Scripture in Colossians III, 4—"When Christ . . . shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory," and in II Timothy, II, 12—"If we suffer (with him), we shall also reign with him." And again in Isaiah XL, 10—"Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold his reward is with him, and his work before him."—the statement is made concerning the Lord's coming. Two things are mentioned here, the **reward** and the **work.** For whom is his reward? His faithful followers are to be rewarded with a place by his own side. Now notice, it does not say:—"His reward is with him and **then** his work will all be accomplished by the rewarding of his church," but "His reward is with him and his work **before** him." What is the work that will be before him when his saints are rewarded by a place at his own right hand? **It is the conversion of the world.** Jude says (verse 14)—"Behold the Lord cometh with

ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly, &c." He comes not to be hard on the world, not to be unkind to them, but—**to convince them.** What is the first thing necessary for conversion? Conviction. **The man that is not convicted of his sin cannot be truly converted;** but one that is convicted of his sin is well on his way to conversion. You remember how it is to be with those men that crucified our Saviour, because they did not know him, did not realize that he was the Messiah. The prophet referring to these men says:—"they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (Zechariah XII, 10). They will be among those that will be convinced of the fact that they crucified the Messiah whom they failed to recognise, and sorrow will fill their hearts because of what they did. They shall mourn for him just like a father mourning for his child who has died.

Dear friends, we realize that **the conversion of the world is going to mean far more than the great majority have ever imagined.** There are no missionaries converting the lions, but these missionaries are going to convert them, and they will also convert the Sahara desert so that "the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose" (Isaiah XI, 6-9; XXXV, 1). We want to show you that this conversion will be a more far-reaching world-wide conversion than man has ever thought. Truly as God says—"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah LV, 9).

We find that to allow the Word to remain in its present obscure misunderstood condition would not facilitate the conversion of the world. If the world is to be converted, then indeed the best thing would be to make God's Word as plain as it could possibly be made. But if during this Gospel Age the world is not to be converted, if the work is the selection and development and testing of the missionaries, we see it is the best thing for their development and testing to allow it to remain obscure during the term they are being selected. We find that this has been the case. God's Word has remained obscure, misunderstood, and it has been difficult of interpretation. Many ideas and various meanings have been attached to its statements, and it has continued so down to the present time. In Revelation XX, 12, after declaring that the Church would rise and reign with Christ the 1000 years, the statement is made that "The books were opened." **The books have not yet been open except to the few who are willing to submit themselves to the Lord's will.** So far as the majority of the race is concerned God's Word is far from being open. But then it will no longer be so. The books will be opened, and that will be the time when the way shall be made so plain that "The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isaiah XXXV, 8). We have heard this Scripture referred to the present time. But surely that is not the case. Surely the way is not so clear and plain as that. Rather it is a very obscure way at present, and **wise men have often erred** during this time, let alone fools. That passage does not refer to this Age but to the coming wonderful Age of world-wide conversion. Isaiah XXXV, 1—"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." I am sure none of us can claim that that is true to-day. The world still has its deserts. That conversion has not yet taken place evidently. When the earth's dominion shall be wrested from the wicked one who has controlled it in the past, and given over to Christ and those missionaries who will be raised to a glorious state with him, then the time will come for the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose until at last the whole earth shall bloom and blossom like the garden of the Lord, and God will make the "place of his feet" glorious (Isaiah LX, 13; LXVI, 1). That will be conversion. When that takes place, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing" (Isaiah XXXV, 5, 6). We are sure that that part of the conversion has not taken place either. There is no part of this earth where we find blind men receiving sight, deaf men receiving hearing and the lame man being enabled to leap; but the time will come when the sick will be converted to health, weak men into strong men, and "the parched ground will become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water" (verse 7). That is part of the work to be accomplished in the Age to follow this. **"A highway shall be there"** in that time (verse 8). It is not true to-day. **The Christian way to-day is not a highway.** A highway, especially in those countries, was easily seen. It was a way thrown up on high so that a man travelling did not have to wade through the marshes and swamps that are to be found there, nor had he the difficulties that a man would have who travelled across uneven country. It is not true to-day. Instead of a highway being cast up free from difficulties, the Christian way is a narrow way (Matthew VI, 14). "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, . . . but the redeemed shall walk there: and **the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads:** they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (verses 9, 10). That evidently is not fulfilled yet, for there are still lions. Satan is still going about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (I Peter V, 8). Sorrow and sighing also have not yet fled away. We find sorrow wherever we look. Men are still sighing. Even God's people to-day are sighing for the better time, which, in God's providence, his Word has taught them to hope for in the future (Romans VIII, 22, 23).

How will all this work be accomplished? Through the wonderful healing power of Christ and his bride who will be exercising dominion. The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings. The desert shall be healed and the inhabitants shall be healed. Even **those who have passed away in death shall be awakened** and brought forth to share in that glorious time. "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which **all that are in their graves** shall hear his voice, and **shall come forth"** (John V, 28, 29). Did not Christ die for all? Does not the Word say over and over again that **"He (Jesus) should taste death for every man"** (Hebrews II, 9). "For **as in Adam ALL die, even so in Christ shall ALL be made alive"** (I Corinthians XV, 22). For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, . . . For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but **that the world through him might be saved"** (John III 16, 17). (Acts XXIV, 14, 15). Now we can see how in our Father's providence this wonderful Age of conversion is to bring to the knowledge of those who died without knowing Christ, and to bring to the knowledge of everyone in all parts of the world, the glorious opportunity for salvation which our Saviour's sacrifice accomplished for all.

We see that to-day there are various obstacles in the way of the world's conversion. In the first place, **probably the greatest obstacle to the world's conversion is the liberty of Satan.** Truly he goes about like a roaring lion. Do not God's people find themselves harassed and their efforts limited, through the power of the wicked one to the extent that God permits? We are told that after the Church is glorified **Satan will be bound,** imprisoned, that he should deceive the nations no more (Revelation XX, 1-3). That will be one obstacle to the conversion of the world removed.

In the second place, **ignorance shall be removed.** We read in the Scripture that "They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the

Lord: for they shall know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah XXXI, 34). There will then be no difference of opinion as to the testimony of God's Word. All will understand God's plan alike.

The third obstacle to the conversion of the world is the weakness of men's minds. **We find so many minds in such a state that it does not matter how clearly the truth is presented to them, they could not grasp it.** Some are insane. If these people are ever to be converted, it will have to be through the removal of their insanity. Others have inherited weaknesses from their parents. **Sometimes people have prejudices and various methods of false reasoning.** It does not matter what may be said or may not be said, nothing would completely off-set the false reasoning these minds follow. But we realize that when the time comes when the Scripture is fulfilled which says—"In these days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Jeremiah XXXI, 29), men will be delivered from their hereditary weaknesses. We understand that **when the object for which God's Word has been obscure has been accomplished, the Lord will then remove the obscurity** that has surrounded his Word. Isaiah says (XXV, 7-9)—"And he (God) will destroy in this mountain (kingdom) the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail (of ignorance) that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory: and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. **And it shall be said in that day, Lo, THIS IS OUR GOD: we have waited for him, and HE will save us:** this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." The dead will be awakened that they may hear the Gospel. It was promised they should hear in order that they as well as others might participate in the benefits which the blood of Christ has assured for all (Luke II, 10). Then these wonderful missionaries will do the glorious work of converting earth's inhabitants and earth's conditions, converting the earth from its present imperfect condition into a paradise, so that God will once more look down and pronounce it "very good." Acts III, 20, 21—"And he (God) shall send Jesus Christ, . . . whom the heavens must receive (retain) until the **times of restitution of all things,** which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." That will indeed be a time of restitution, a time in which, under the power of Christ and his Church, the conditions upon this earth and amongst the members of the human race on this earth will be restored, restituted, to just what they were before the Fall. Why! if such conditions were brought about, if Christ and the Church would take control of the earth, and Satan was bound, if this earth had all its sorrows removed with Satan no longer to deceive and tempt man, if obedience meant blessing and favour, then nobody would want to sin, everybody would want to obey the Lord and do his will. Here are a few scriptures along that line—Psalm CX, 3—**"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."** When that time comes and Christ and his Church take control of earth, the people will be willing then. Because of the imperfect conditions that exist on the earth they are not willing to-day to submit themselves to him, but in the day of his power they will be willing. Psalm XVIII, 44—**"As soon as they hear of me they shall obey me. The strangers shall submit themselves unto me."** The thought seems to be that when that time comes, and all the world hears that Christ has taken earth's dominion, they will submit themselves unto him. Again, in that same line, Psalm LXVI, 3, 4—"Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! **through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.** All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee."

Having called your attention to these passages, I want you to notice a peculiarity about the last two. In the margin, each of them has—**"shall yield feigned obedience."** "Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies yield feigned obedience." That is, **when that time comes the conditions will be just the reverse of what they are to-day.** The conditions, just like everything else, have to be converted. We understand that at that time the man who does wrong will be quickly punished, and the man who does right will be swiftly rewarded. As it is, to-day the man that does right is likely to suffer, and the man that does wrong is likely to prosper. It will be the reverse then. **"The way of the wicked he turneth upside down"** (Psalm CXLVI, 9). It will no longer be a fact that wickedness will prosper. Then, righteousness will prosper and wickedness will be followed by the punishment it merits. We expect that everybody will try to submit themselves to the Lord and do what he wants them to do. If they serve God, it will be better for their health, their position in life, and their interests in every direction. That will be the time when not only spiritual prosperity but also natural prosperity will result from right-doing. The Psalmist says that, as soon as that time comes round, many even of the Lord's enemies will submit, but in their case it will not be heart obedience but feigned obedience, not because they really love him, but because **the new conditions will be introduced in which it will pay to do right.** As a consequence, as time goes on, some of these will probably come to love that condition, though at first they just submitted themselves because it paid to do so. The feigned obedience will gradually be converted into a heart obedience. They will by-and-bye have learned to so love the conditions of that time that they would be faithful even at the cost of suffering. On the other hand, **there will be some who will continue to yield feigned obedience.** They will never come into heart harmony with the Lord, they will never reach the point where that obedience to him will be from their love of righteousness. The Scriptures show us that Satan is to be loosed for a little season at the end. What will this be for? It will be in order to manifest those who have yielded only feigned obedience (Revelation XX, 1-3, 7, 8). Such will be likely to see some way that they think they will gain more by submitting to Satan's suggestion than by a loyalty to the Lord. They will manifest themselves and demonstrate the fact that they have never come into heart harmony but only feigned submission to the Master. We understand that such will be cut off as unworthy of a place in the Lord's glorious Kingdom (Acts III, 23).

Some might be inclined to say—"If this is the way the conversion is to take place, it will only require a week or two for the conversion of everybody, and some who will be unfaithful to the Lord will be cut off, and in a year or two that work will all be ended and the conversion of the world will be accomplished." We say—Oh no, dear friends, Conversion would be accomplished in a very short time if it meant only the giving up of bad habits, the resigning of tendencies in the direction of real wicked things. In that sense it will be a quick work and require only a short time. **But this conversion that the Lord has in mind is such a wonderful thing that it is going to require a whole thousand years for its accomplishment.** In Revelation XX, 4, we read—"they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years," and it will not be until the end of that thousand years that the remainder of the dead will be living in the perfect sense. Not until that time will they be converted to righteousness, not merely to what man calls righteousness to-day, but to such a height of righteousness as could be esteemed and accounted righteousness in the sight of the Lord and the holy angels. Not until that time will they be converted from sickness to perfect health, not what men would consider health to-day, but absolutely perfect health. By that time the present unfavourable conditions will give place to that condition where sorrow and sighing shall flee away. We understand that **the Lord in his goodness**

has arranged to be good even to those who will refuse to come into harmony with him. You remember how the Scripture says—"The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works" (Psalm CXLV, 9). We understand that even to the incorrigibly wicked who refuse such obedience, he is going to be good. He could not but be good to everybody.

Some people tell us the wicked do not deserve such a good time as that. If they do not come into harmony in this life they do not deserve anything in the future. Well, dear friends, if you and I got only what we deserve we would not get very much. But we are glad that the Lord is going to do more for us than any of us deserve. We have seen that the Lord is good to those that have come into harmony with him in this Age, and that he is going to be good to those who will come into harmony with him in that Age, and that he is going to be good even to those that will not come into harmony with him at all. **He is not going to allow them to live eternally in a universe where everything is so pure. To live on in a universe free from sin,** whereas they love sin, **would mean an eternity of torture to them,** and the Heavenly Father, realizing that there is not a place in the universe where they could be happy, will **blot them out from that universe.** As is said in his Word "all the wicked will he destroy" (Psalm CXLV, 20). It is impossible to tell to-day who the wicked are. Some we might consider wicked are merely ignorant, or some have inherited weaknesses and are unable to keep right. Some may be merely unfortunate probably. But the conditions of the coming Age will demonstrate who are really wicked and **"all the wicked will God destroy."**

I trust that what I have said to-night will enable you to understand to some extent at least why God has given us a Bible so difficult to understand. It is because **he has not meant the world to be converted in this Age, but has been selecting a few faithful ones, and then in the next Age when the world is to be converted, the Bible will be plain.** It will then be seen by all that the Bible has accomplished just what he intended it should. That is the time when the Lord will remove the vail of the covering that is spread over all peoples.

In Revelation XIX, 7, we read—"The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready," and then in Revelation XXI, 2—"I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." This bride we all realize is the **Church of Christ** united with her Lord. And John, when speaking of the wonderful light that came from that new Jerusalem (Christ and his Church) said (verse 24)—"And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it." In the perfect earth under those perfect conditions, the nations of those that are saved as a result of the influence of the Sun of Righteousness will be permitted to spend a glorious **earthly** eternity, even as the faithful in this Age will share Christ's **heavenly** glory in all the Ages that are to come.

Amen.

Our Confidence.

By Brother Fred. Guard.

YOU will find our text in Hebrews X, 35—"Cast not away therefore your confidence which hath great recompense of reward."

We want if possible, this morning, to make from our text a discourse of warning, and a discourse of encouragement. Of course we know that every one of us needs plenty of encouragement, but often fail to see our need of warning. We want to be particularly on the alert. The adversary of our souls is brisker than ever before. His energies are centred upon you and upon me to undermine if possible, and break down our confidence. We want the encouraging part of our discourse to be seen and enter our hearts, knowing that our redemption draweth nigh. Knowing that the work our Heavenly Father has been pleased to commence he will be pleased to finish properly, for our blessing, and also for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

Many people have confidence in themselves, many have confidence in their abilities, and many have confidence in their pockets. But we do think that for any of God's people to have confidence in themselves, their abilities or their pockets, is always hurtful. If they have confidence in wealth, we understand that wealth has wings and oftimes flies away. If their confidence is in somebody else, it very often happens that their confidence gets quickly shaken. Others put their confidence in many things, but the things invariably fail, and they suffer loss. But the confidence we are going to talk about to-day is a different confidence from the foregoing. **It is about the confidence in God our Father;** and we do suggest this, that when our confidence in God our Father is once firmly grounded, it is not quickly or easily shaken. You get confidence shaken in your dearest friend, but it is not an easy matter to shake down the confidence which is placed in our Heavenly Father, when it is placed there on the bases and foundations which he propounds for us.

Now we will ask ourselves "What grounds have we for having any confidence along these lines at all?" One says "I **feel** that I have confidence." But feelings will not help the matter for us. Someone else says "Dear Brother, when I look at the **wonderful leadings** I have had, I could not doubt, I feel sure with all these leadings that my confidence is secure in God." We do not believe that that is enough. There may be many kinds of leadings, and they may be remarkable, but they will not form a solid basis alone for confidence. Someone else says "I have had such **wonderful experiences.** In fact, too wonderful to mention; and some amount to veritable revelations." **Now don't let us run away after revelations, or visions, or experiences.** They will not prove a firm foundation for confidence.

We believe that the only ground for confidence in God is knowledge. This only ground,—knowledge,—we believe must be the knowledge of God himself; and we shall try to show by God's grace this morning, and in his own way we trust, how this confidence in Him can be firmly grounded.

A writer, referring to knowledge, shows us how the energies of our hearts and minds must indicate that at least **we desire to get the knowledge,** and so make it manifest. He says, that as far as a perfect being is concerned, such an one needs character to be formed or to be engraved, in his being; and we, God's people, likewise, as new born babes, starting in this glorious work of ministry,—this glorious scheme and work of love,—recognize that it is necessary that this engraving process must take place in us. The suggestion is this,—that there are but two scribing tools which can do the engraving for us. There is **knowledge,** and there is **free-will;** and these two things acting as scribing points, carve or mark out in us the character necessary. We believe this is a logical and reasonable fact. The writer points out that we might use these implements to

engrave pride, ambition and selfishness; or we can use the same implements to engrave love, humility and meekness. On the one hand, if we engrave pride, ambition and selfishness, the product would be a wicked being. On the other hand, if we engrave love, humility and meekness, the product would be a god-like being. You see the whole figure would indicate exactly what the Apostle says in first Corinthians (III, 12),—the wood, the hay, and the stubble of pride, of ambition and of selfishness on the one hand; on the other hand, the love, the humility, and the meekness would indicate nothing short of the gold, the silver, and the precious stones. These latter figures of speech show us the beautiful depth of character which the Lord himself would desire us all to attain to, settled on a sure foundation.

Now we believe this knowledge is to be not only **of** God, but the knowledge which gives the confidence must also be **from** God. It must be about him. All we learn about him must be from him before we can learn of him. You remember away back in those early days when God was about to destroy Sodom, he had respect to his promise; and how great was God's consideration towards Abraham, who was called the Friend of God; he said—"Shall I hide from Abraham this thing that I do, seeing that in him the nations shall all be blessed?" It seems a wonderful thing for the Heavenly Father to say—"Shall I hide this?" We can imagine him speaklng thus in regard to the matter—"Will it be kind to hide this thing from him? I don't want to overthrow his faith when the wicked cities are destroyed. I do not want him to think that that promise I made him will fail; his faith may be shaken when he thinks of these persons going down into death, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. I will tell him of the thing that I am going to do." Much more then, dear Brethren, will he inform you and me; much more will he not keep back anything which we ought to know, seeing that through us, by God's grace in Christ, all the families—all the race—will receive a blessing. He will keep us well informed. He will give us information and knowledge which will strengthen our confidence in him, and which will give us a foundation which will be hard, very hard, to shake.

How is it, then, we are to get the knowledge of God from God? How is it to come from God? We have never seen God. We have never heard his voice, nor has our natural eye seen his shape. How are we to get this knowledge from him which will mark for us such a sure and certain foundation, and will strengthen and firmly uphold our confidence? We believe we can get it from the Scriptures. We not only believe this, but we also believe we can get it from nowhere else. We believe the Heavenly Father has laid down rules and regulations there; and the knowledge which he wishes to impart to his own people comes through the Scriptures, and through the Scriptures alone.

By what we are going to say this morning, we hope that if there are any who perchance may not have this confidence, that they will, when they have heard what the Scriptures say concerning it, be clear on the matter that at least there is something to be confident about. And if any have only a partial confidence, they may, by the same means, get it completed. And any here who have full confidence in the Lord, who have tasted that the Lord is good, may they be encouraged to make their confidence firm so that they will be able to say to others—"Cast not away therefore your confidence. It is a valuable asset. It is a glorious possession."

The Scriptures, then, must be the source of our information; and now, just for our mutual uplift, we shall state what we term seven confidential Scripture facts, though we do not mean to say that there are only seven confidential facts in the Scriptures. You have probably heard all about them before. We put them down as seven in number because it is a Divine number, and it will prove a mnemonic, i.e., a something that will aid you to call them to mind. The seven facts are confidential facts, because we are sure that the masses of humanity do not yet comprehend them in all their beauty, and we are sure that only those who have been blessed by a knowledge of them in God's own way can fully comprehend what is suggested, and what is hidden beneath these remarkable confidential facts. You may call them what you like. Call them Scriptural elementaries. Call them ecclesiastical fundamentals, or anything; all we suggest is that they are facts, facts of Scripture, facts concerning the foundation which God lays down for his people to build upon. Now these are the facts—First, the Fall of man. Second, the Promise made to Abraham. Third, the Lamb of God. Fourth, the Ransomer and Redeemer. Fifth, the High-calling of God in Jesus Christ. Sixth, the Chief Resurrection. Seventh, the Restitution of all things. These are the seven fundamentals which are set forth in the Scriptures, and which we suggest are sufficiently clear and logical, and have sufficient proof behind them to show that they are the veritable bases of God's plan, and the veritable foundations of the hope and confidence of every child of God.

Now, we want to call your attention to some text proofs from the Scriptures, which relate to, and corroborate all of those confidential facts. We will give you one or two of each to show you that the writers of the Holy Writ were quite clear on these matters and that on every point they were in harmony with these fundamentals; thus proving that they are the God-given fundamentals which are going to redound to his honour, his work, and his plan, and stimulate and establish our confidence in him.

You will remember with regard to our Lord himself, that it was he who opened up the Scriptures, as we read in Luke XXIV, 32—"Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" And with this in mind, let us see what Scripture bears upon **fact number one**—the **FALL.** See Romans V, 12—"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men." That text ought to establish our confidence in the first fact. The great Apostle of the Gentiles was able to say, that by one man sin entered, and death by sin. But in harmony with this, he also said (verse 21)—"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign . . . unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Let us notice **number two**—the **PROMISE TO ABRAHAM** —another confidential fact in the Scriptures. In Galatians III, 16, we read—"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many: but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Notice also in Hebrews VI, 13-18—"For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, . . . Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." He says that on our account alone this promise was made, that we might receive great confidence in that respect. There then, the Apostle corroborates again something for our confidence to be established, in the fact that the promise made to Abraham was no mere play on words, no mere airy utterance, but one solid fact which was going to show in its outgrowth the great plan of Jehovah.

In **number three**, we referred to the **LAMB OF GOD.** We can immediately bring to our mind the words of John the Baptist, when he said—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John I, 29). And in Acts XIII, 38, we read—"Be it known unto you therefore, . . . that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." Here we have corroborative evidence of the import of the words which John uttered, when he claimed the attention of those who were about to pass into the new Dispensation. As the book of prophecy was closing, and John's ministry was ending, his call

was—"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

Number four, the **REDEEMER** and **RANSOMER.** We have something with regard to this which the Scripture writers will also corroborate for us. While we are told that he gave himself a ransom for all, we are told that on that account he became Lord of all, not only Lord of the living, but Lord of the dead. These Scriptures are:—1 Timothy II, 5, 6—"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time," and Romans XIV, 9—"For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." Notice, he became the owner of all, with a right to do as he likes with all. Lord both of the dead and the living.

Number five, the **HIGH-CALLING.** This is a point which some would have us believe does not exist in the Bible; or if it does exist there, the opportunity to attain its honours has long past; and lower honours are now on offer. But we have respect to the one hope of our calling (Ephesians IV, 4). And what does the Apostle say about us in Second Timothy I, 9?—"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace," and in Philippians III, 14—he says—"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The Apostles all agree in their testimony of the fundamental facts referring to the Fall, to the Promise, and to the Lamb of God. They corroborate the truth of the ransom price, and the redeeming power of the Redeemer, and prove to us beyond peradventure, the existence of the High-calling in Christ Jesus.

For the **sixth confidential fact,** referring to the **CHIEF RESURRECTION**, see Romans VI, 5—"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." That is corroborated again by the Apostle in first Corinthians XV, 20—"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." And for the **last confidential fact**, the seventh, the **RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS,** see Acts III, 20, 21—"And he (Jehovah) shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive (retain) until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

Bear in mind, in choosing these texts to which we have referred (and we will refer to them again presently), each one of them is a Scriptural corroboration of these notable facts, around which cluster the great work of Jehovah on behalf of humanity; and not only on behalf of humanity, but on behalf of many of the higher order of beings who stepped aside from the path of rectitude, through the lack of knowledge of Him and his goodness. And please remember when thinking of these texts, that each one of us must prove them, if we would strengthen the confidence which we have in Jehovah and his precious promises.

There is a notable point in our text—"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." It is an important point; and the importance of the whole verse lies in this point. Did you not notice that there is one word in the text around which the rest revolves? It is not the question of the reward. It is not the question of the confidence. But it is the word "therefore." Notice that when you discuss a matter with someone and say "therefore," you prove that your previous words, inferences, arguments or logic demand the use of such a word in summing up the matter, as being within sound reasoning. You say, for instance, "If I knock that bottle over, and find, besides broken glass, there is water also on the floor," I say, "therefore the bottle contained water." You see the idea? "Cast not away, therefore (on account of what I have been arguing with you, on account of the proofs I have laid before you, might I not reasonably suggest to you), therefore, do not throw away your confidence." This is the initial point of the verse, and of the Apostle's argument, giving peculiar force to his admonition.

We will just call your attention to seven more Scriptures in which the writers use this same kind of argument; and each of them in relation to the seven confidential, cardinal, fundamental facts of our discourse. We have called your attention, and given Scriptural proofs, to the Fall, to the Promise, to the Lamb of God, to the Redeemer, to the High-calling, to the Chief Resurrection, and to the Restitution. We will now show Scripture texts which will help you to see how the writers urge every point, giving us a "therefore" for each. The logic of their arguments is brought to a point for the hearers' benefit. In connection with the thought of the first point (the Fall), see Romans II, 1—"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself." The thought of Paul is—"As I have demonstrated to you, 'therefore,' O man, thou art inexcusable,"—so that he includes the whole human race as having fallen through transgression. The Apostle here corroborates the fact of the Fall, and his argumentative decision is, "therefore" man is inexcusable.

With regard to the Promise to Abraham, let us look in the third chapter of Galatians and the seventh verse. He says, after discussing the point with them again,—"Know ye 'therefore' that they which are of faith, the same are the Children of Abraham." Or in other words—"Therefore, you know that those who have faith are the children of Abraham."—"Therefore, those who have faith have a great interest in the Promise made to Abraham." The "Seed" of Abraham are those in whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed, "Therefore, on the basis of my argument, you know that those who have faith are of the 'Seed' of Abraham." Should not that additionally strengthen our confidence, and encourage us in the knowledge that the Father knows the end from the beginning. That when he made that gracious Promise, he made something that was to stand the test of time and eternity?

The third fact, with regard to the Lamb of God. Let us see what Peter says in his first Epistle, chapter one, verses 18-20—"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot:" (next chapter, first verse)—"**Wherefore** (or therefore, the same word), laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings" (like little lambs, tractable, teachable, copies of the Lamb of God, leadable, easy to be entreated, full of love and humility and good works, full of joy and peace and of the Holy Spirit), "as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby." There is corroborative evidence in the Apostle Peter's argument,—"Therefore, as new-born babes." Therefore (as I have pointed out to you this Lamb of God who was without spot and without blemish), you also endeavour to so walk.

The fourth fact, the Ransomer, or the Redeemer. We have most conclusive evidence with regard to this point, more than any other point in the Scriptures. In Philippians II, 9 the Apostle says—"Wherefore (or therefore) God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." Why is it he was exalted? Paul explains in the previous verse—"And being found in fashion as a man, he (Jesus) humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—"Therefore, God also hath highly exalted him." His will was sunk in his Father's will. His delight was to do his Father's will; and let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus (verse 5). He became obedient unto death,—Therefore, because he humbled himself, that should strengthen our hope and joy in the Lord, to do as the Apostle enjoins,—"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God" (1 Peter V, 6).

The fifth fact, the High-calling in Christ Jesus, we find in

Second Thessalonians, first chapter, eleventh verse—"Wherefore (or therefore) also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him." Wherefore! Why was it he prayed that the Lord would count us worthy? Because he pointed out that the Lord was coming in due time,—"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 8). He comes to take vengeance. But we know also, that he comes with a glorious recompense of reward as well;—"Wherefore, we pray always," says the Apostle. Cannot we do the same one for another?

The sixth fact, referring to the First or Chief Resurrection, we find in the sixth chapter of Romans, verses four and five—"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." You know what the Revelator says about those who share in the likeness of His resurrection,—"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Revelation XX, 6). Nothing that defileth can be called "Blessed and holy." No one who failed to uphold and adhere to that confidence in God could be called that. But our text encourages such "holy" ones, saying—"Cast not away therefore your confidence." Truly the promises of God give us confidence and strength and encouragement, and proclaim his truth all the way along. Dear Brethren, if there is any High-calling at all, we know that there is a First or Chief Resurrection; and if there is any Fall of man at all, we may be sure there is a great Redeemer coming to bring about the full force of the redemptive work; and so with the Promise to Abraham, we may be sure, on the basis of God's Word, that its fulfilment will come about in the proper way; so, last of all, in the seventh fact, and in harmony with these logical deductions, the Apostle says, referring to the Restitution of all things, in the third chapter of Acts, nineteenth verse—"Repent ye 'therefore' and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." These words were spoken to the Jewish people, and these words are applicable to you and to me that we might watch our every step, that we might be pure and unblemished, and that we may be found in him.

The Apostles having been taught of God, and having the Scriptures opened up to them by the Redeemer, how clearly and harmoniously they have propounded these things for us and given us a confidence which nothing can shake, if it is fixed and grounded in God our Father in his own way, and upon his own sure foundation.

We pointed out just now that knowledge was necessary, and that it was to be knowledge **of** God, that it was to be knowledge **from** God, and that the knowledge of God could only and would only come from God. We asked you to bear in mind the first set of texts we referred to, and now, as we remind you again, we draw your attention to this fact,—You may not have noticed that every one of those first set of Scriptures which corroborated those facts, every one from the first to the last, call our attention to one individual. Did you notice that? If not, then note now, that **they all call our attention to the Christ of God.** Every one points to, and every one impresses upon us, the identity of that One who gave himself on our behalf; that it was by one man's transgression that sin came, and that it was by One (Christ) that righteousness shall come. It was the Promise to Abraham which showed that the "Seed" was not spoken of as seeds, as of many, but as of one, which is Christ, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. It was the Ransomer who gave Himself, and it was He to whom our attention was called as the man Christ Jesus who humbled himself, and became obedient unto death. In the High-calling, we are told that it was the High-calling of God in Christ Jesus. In the First Resurrection, we are told that we are to be in the **likeness of his resurrection.** In the Restitution of all things, we are told that He (Jehovah) was to send Jesus Christ. What a great part this One has in the Great Jehovah's plan. Is there any work, or is there any plan of any value, in which he has not a part? Surely not. That is the great impression that we want to make upon each other, that our confidence may be attested.

You will notice how those seven fundamentals, or confidentials are arranged. There are first, three,—the Fall; the Promise to Abraham; and the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Then there is the next one great central figure of the whole lot,—the Ransomer and Redeemer. And then the last three,—the High-calling of God in Christ Jesus; the Chief Resurrection; and the Restitution of all things. How remarkable that they should be like that. In a sense it reminds us of a thought which we get from the "transfiguration" on the mount,—Moses, the Lord, and Elijah. The first three facts make us think of the Law and the Prophets until John, or the "Moses" side; the last three make us think of the Church, and the Christ of God, the "Elijah" side; and our Great Ransomer and Redeemer is the central figure in glistening garments of praise, the altogether lovely! And so we notice that in everything, this Great One, our Lord Jesus, is pre-eminent. In everything God puts him pre-eminent; in everything the Apostles put him pre-eminent; and all the prophets put him pre-eminent,—"That in all things he might have the pre-eminence" (Colossians I, 18). It was He who made this confidence of ours a possibility. It was He who set the example to hold and retain such a confidence as is shown here; and it seems that all through the Scriptures this one note is struck for us, calling our attention to this Great One sent forth by God.

The Apostle Paul's desire was ever to exalt his Lord. Suppose we had the Apostle here with us, and suppose we started a talk something like this:—"Well, friend Paul, we do not quite understand yet how you harmonize many things. Conditions are so very unequal; and though you claim a good deal, yet we don't seem to see much done in the way of improving matters. **Do you really think there is such a plan,** etc., there seems to be great cause for doubt in our minds. You know, Paul, one in a certain place said—What is man, that thou art mindful of him? Now after all, man is a very small affair. **There seems to be very little likelihood that the Heavenly Father would think much of us.**" The Apostle would answer like this:—"Yes, one in a certain place did testify saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels, thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet."—And suppose we here interrupted and said—"Ah! friend Paul, there is just the trouble, you know, and though David said it, yet we don't see all these things subject to man. Have you not erred, Paul?"—"No," the Apostle would calmly answer, "We see not yet all things put under him. But, we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels"—"Ah!" we answer, "just like Adam was. Go on Paul"—"for the suffering of death." "Why!" we exclaim, "Just what Adam experienced! What is that for, Paul?"—and the Apostle answers—"That he by the grace of God **should taste death for every man.**" "Oh! how grand! why that **puts our Lord Jesus as the very kernal of God's plan.**" "Yes! We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for **every** man!" Now that is the place where Jesus is put, and we have put him in that place this morning,

because we believe it is the best place, and the proper place; and we join the Apostle in saying—"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (II Corinthians IX, 15).

Now we have pointed out that the knowledge that is to be **of** God is to come **from** God; and that such knowledge is contained in the **Scriptures**, from which we have given you quite sufficient quotations to prove that it is all there. But how are we to get it all, and be instructed along these lines? It is possible for us to read the Scriptures and make errors. How are we to get it out of the Scriptures? We are to get it out of the Scriptures in the same way as those in the early days got it. Luke XXIV, 27, 32—"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, **he (Jesus) expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.**" "And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us, while he (Jesus) talked with us by the way, and while he **opened to us the Scriptures?**" And we say, Will he not open them up to us? Yes, he will. Hear what Paul says in I Corinthians I, 1-5—"Paul, called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, . . . to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, . . . I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in everything ye are enriched in him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge." How then, is it coming about? First, knowledge **of** God is the necessary thing; and it is to be **from** God; and Jesus is the **only** channel through which we can get it, for in the Word of Truth, the Scriptures, **He (Jesus) is set forth as the key note.** Let us say once again, then,—"He opened up to us the Scriptures." As he first began to establish their confidence, so shall He open to us.

We have further interesting proof along this line, where the writer in I Corinthians I, 30, referring to Christ, says—"Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." This is how it is going to come about:—He, Jesus, is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. Notice the first thing that is mentioned —**"WISDOM."** That is knowledge. God's first gift to man, that very gift which man possesses to-day, and which is being misused in every direction. The very choicest gift, so misused to-day, will bring about the disintregration of all the present conditions, plans, arrangements, etc., and break them all down; setting at nought the social conditions, and wrecking them entirely. But the very same gift, we are told, is going to be the eternal mainstay and safe-guard of everyone who eventually enters into the Kingdom of God, and is approved of him. Christ, dear Brethren, has become to us "Wisdom," therefore we might rightly say that he is **our** Wisdom. He is not the world's wisdom, not at all. How is he going to begin the work of making himself and his Father known? By uncovering a sure foundation for everyone who loves him, to enable them to hold fast the confidence in him; and to everyone who gets on the sure foundation by the new and living way; along which the Apostles also went (Hebrews X, 20), Paul says—"Cast not away **therefore** your confidence." Therefore the Apostle says he is our "Wisdom."

The first effect of the wisdom of God that comes to us or that should come to us, that will be of any value, will be to call our attention to at least three things. (1)—That the race fell in its first parent, and brought it all down to the grave with him. When once we recognize that fact, dear friends, we will also recognize the next,—(2)—that we ourselves are encumbered with weaknesses; in health even, we are broken and weak, helpless through the Fall. (3)—We get wisdom from on high, to see that God imposed a penalty, and that the penalty imposed was a just one; and we shall not make a mistake about it. We see that if the ransom was a necessity, the Redeemer was also a necessity to carry out the fulness of God's plan, the knowledge comes first along these lines from the very centre and Great One of God's plan, from the One whom he made to be the head of the Church which is his body; from the One whom he has made pre-eminent in all things. He becomes our wisdom, giving us that gracious confidence in God.

He becomes our **"RIGHTEOUSNESS."** How does he become our righteousness? See Romans V, 1—"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." That is how he becomes our righteousness. His merit becomes imputed to us, that he might take hold of us, and cover our blemishes, that we might be acceptable to God. What added confidence this brings!

He becomes our **"SANCTIFICATION."** He alone can give us the cue, give us the key note. He alone makes access possible into the hope of the glory of God, by a consecrated life, with the appropriated righteousness which he imputes. He calls every one of us into this life of sacrifice. He sets all our demerits aside, so that we get in him the approval that he gets, anticipating a share with him in the honours of the Chief Resurrection.

He becomes our **"REDEMPTION."** "Why," you say, "We are not redeemed yet." Yes, we are redeemed in the way the Apostle says,—"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians I, 14). That is our redemption, at present in faith. Our redemption will be fully realized when we change this vile body. When this company of believers in their humility and lowliness, will change it for the glorious body (Philippians III, 20, 21), then the redemption in its fullest sense will be fully appreciated. And we can appreciate it as well now by faith.

The Lord himself was very solicitous with regard to us. It was for us for whom he prayed, you remember, so carefully, so thoughtfully, aud so tenderly, that we all of like precious faith might know the Lord.—John XVII, 9—"I pray for them (his Apostles), **I pray not for the world,** but for them which thou hast given me," and in the twentieth verse—"Neither pray I for these alone (not for the Apostles only), but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" (for us of the Gospel Age who believe on Jesus through the writings of the Apostles), and the purpose of it all is—"That they may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, **that they may also be one in us:** that the **world** may believe that thou hast sent me" (verse 21). His great heart of love went out beyond us to the world also. He prayed that we might have confidence in him that the world might know, that the world might believe. His heart went out to all those over whom in due time he should be Chief, and Lord. That is how the Lord set forth his desire. And that is how the Lord expressed his own confidence in the Heavenly Father. Even now, the poor world has a certain amount of confidence. We hear the poor misguided ones on their death-bed say—"I do not know what I have done to suffer all this. I am sure the Lord is gracious." They have confidence of a kind, though with no basis, but nevertheless, a confidence. How much more then, dear Brethren, should we who have the light of life, the light of truth, have this our confidence. Why have we selected this text—that we should not cast away our confidence? The reason is this, that the Apostles inform us repeatedly, the prophets warn us continually, that—**"in the latter days some shall depart from the faith,** giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats," "Spots in our love feasts" will be more discernible. "Like raging waves of the sea foaming out their own shame," some will be marked among the Lord's people, causing some to fall by false schemes of salvation and errors along lines which they claim to be truth; changing the truth of God into a lie. The reason we impress upon you, and upon all the Lord's people, that you cast not away your confidence, is also because **among those who claim to be lights in Christendom,** we are warned that **the falling away will be most marked.** We urge you to

cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. We have seen, then, that to get this confidence, settled and grounded, we need it to be based upon the knowledge **of** God. We have found that the knowledge will come **from** God. We have proved that the knowledge from God is embodied in the **Scriptures.** We have proved that the opening up of the Scriptures can only be through and at the hands of the One who is Lord both of the living and the dead. And we understand that the very beginnings of all knowledge that shall come to mankind at any time from now onwards, begins at the "house of God." He has become to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

We now want to call your attention to one more thing with regard to your confidence. You understand, of course, that **we live in a peculiar time—"the time of the end,"** a time which is particularly marked in Scripture. It is particularly marked by an increase of knowledge; and our Heavenly Father has not been behind-hand with regard to his people. The world has advanced in knowledge along many lines—valuable knowledge on all subjects, yet the Lord's people have been buoyed up also, and lifted over a sea of glass as it were, that the eyes of their understanding may be enlightened along the lines of truth. And to us now, it is most important to ask what are the means, or what is the special channel at this particular time, whereby the Heavenly Father has seen fit to send forth his message to us? We feel we must not leave this out. The means, the channel through which you and I have received these precious truths, are marvellous. Our Lord Jesus, you remember, in his last message to the Churches, said—"To (or by) the messenger of the congregation in Laodicea, write." In other words, he said—"Do not expect that I am going to speak in audible tones to the Church. I am going to send a message to them by the hands of a messenger." And as God's way has been through his messenger, using Christ as our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption, so our Lord Jesus, in taking his own prerogative, is now sending his message through a messenger. The "Laodicean" period is the last phase of the Church on earth. The last phase is called upon now, to receive its message from the one who has the seven stars in his hand,—indicating that all necessary light is now shining,—therefore, its message is now given; and above all, we have seen this message of light and love shine forth in the steady flow of knowledge till now through that one God-given source, we realize that it is from the messenger of the congregation in Laodicea. Thank God for this glorious harvest message! Thank God for the source, the channel and the messenger through whom he has sent it! The channel we have received it through, we thank God also, is a pure one. It is the channel that shows each of us (if peradventure we have not yet cast away our confidence), how to realize God's goodness and the fulness of his promises.

We are reminded of the confidential cry of the Psalmist in the fortieth Psalm—"I waited patiently for the Lord, he inclined unto me and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust."

Let us call your attention to one more point in our text—"Cast not away therefore your confidence." Whose confidence? Your Brother's? Your Sister's? or the Lord's? No! "Cast not away therefore **YOUR** confidence," which is your valuable asset. It is a confidence which has been established by your application to the truth, the confidence which has become yours. Christ has become unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. The Apostle rightly says that it is your confidence, and therefore, you are not to cast it away, because it hath exceeding recompense of reward. But do not let us run away with the idea that the Christian's reward is a matter for future consideration alone and future hopes only. Not so. For if you reckon it now as your confidence **in** God, your confidence **from** God, your confidence through his **Word** at the hands of the **Lord Jesus,** the great Advocate, the great expounder of God's truth, your confidence based upon these confidential facts, you may be sure it is your confidence; so that when the Apostle says that that confidence has a great recompense of reward, that recompense of reward, dear Brethren, begins **now.** You are getting it every day of the week. You are getting in now. That great recompense of reward begins now in the joy of knowing the Lord, in the joy of helping in his service, in the delight of being made a confidant of the Most High, in the joy of having the confidential truths of his Word opened up to you. And the Apostle tells us that if we are encompassed about with such a great cloud of witnesses, then let us—"lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews XII, 1, 2). Do not run wrong. "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain" (I Corinthians IX, 24). Run like the man that wins. Therefore, dear Brethren, let us urge you once again in the words of the Apostle—Cast not away therefore your confidence which hath great recompense of reward.

Amen.

Crossing Jordan; Passing of the Priests.

By Brother J. J. Bilsbrough.

OUR text is Joshua III, 17—"And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan."

The incident referred to in this chapter is a strange and dramatic spectacle that occurred in the olden times, bearing wondrous lessons to us upon whom the ends of the age have come (I Corinthians X, 11).

Four hundred and seventy years had passed since that promise was made to Abraham—"Unto thy seed will I give this land" (Genesis XII, 7); notwithstanding, as Stephen in his wondrous defence before the Sanhedrin, said—"He gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession and to his seed after him,"—but now the long looked-for promise was to have, at least, its partial fulfilment as regards that portion about the land being given to his seed. About two million people had passed through the long, weary, desert journey, and had arrived at the south-east portion of that goodly land which they could behold on the other side of Jordan, the land of Canaan, a goodly land inhabited by wealthy nations, powerful nations, who, like

Sodom, had fallen into great excesses of licentious idolatry.

To understand the scene a little better, I will just read from Dr. Porter's book—"Through Galilee to the Jordan"—"The valley of the Jordan to the plain of Jericho is flat, mostly bare of trees, but in the Spring and early Summer it is clothed with rank grass and weeds. Down its centre winds a glen, half a mile wide, and about one hundred and fifty feet deep, its banks formed of long ranges of conical mounds cut out in the soft white soil and which looked at a distance like ranges of white tents. The bottom of the glen is a rich alluvial deposit, covered everywhere with dense jungles of cane, oleander, and other shrubs. The vegetation, as well as the temperature, is tropical; and the glen is a fitting home for wild beasts; and you can quite understand how they would be very much disturbed in their lairs, when there came the swellings of Jordan; which occurred at this time. Through the centre of the glen, in a winding course within banks of its own, flows the river." In ordinary seasons, the Jordan (a rapid flowing river, falling,—in the space of sixty miles from Lake Gennesaret,—about seven hundred feet by means of cascades) has a width of about ninety feet, and a depth of about thirty feet; but now it was swollen by flood water, from the melting of the snow on Mount Hermon, the time being about the end of March, and it was quite impassable for such a crossing by such a company.

Now, let us, in imagination, stand where Moses stood, and view the landscape o'er. We would have to pass through those valleys of Moab, where the great Lawgiver was laid to rest by the hand of God himself; and high up to the top of mount Nebo, about the same place where, a very short time before, that strange, dubious prophet, Balaam, stood, when he was sent for to curse the Children of Israel. He stood on the top there, and said he had heard the words of God, and had seen the vision of the Almighty. He had fallen into a trance with his eyes open; and, as he looked down upon that marvellous throng beneath him, he could not help exclaiming—"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters" (Numbers XXIV, 1-6). And so in imagination we look upon the scene that day. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" What a gathering together there was that memorable day!

The great procession began to move on. They had struck their tents for the last time on the east side of Jordan. They were within sight of the wondrous promised land; but how to get across? No bridges, no fords; absolutely impassable; and because of that, the Canaanites felt secure. They never attempted to bar the passage, never attempted to parade their forces there. They felt absolutely secure in the presence of the flooded waters; they reckoned not of the God of the Hebrews. The first to step out from the ranks, was the little company of priests bearing the mysterious ark of God—the God of the whole world,—and, to let their course be clearly seen, the priests had to go ahead of the others. They went to the river, and turned up two thousand cubits—we should say about three-quarters of a mile,—along the eastern bank of the Jordan. When they came to a certain spot right against Jericho, they began to cross the river. In doing so, the feet of the priests had actually to touch the water. I can imagine that there were spectators on the other side, on the hilly portions about Jericho; and if so, the men of Jericho, watching, could not but be surprised at their attempting such a passage as that. These spectators might almost have stood upon the very place where, years afterwards, fifty sons of the prophets watched Elijah and Elisha go down and cross Jordan (II Kings II, 5-8).

What patience and courage and confidence that little band must have had! The swollen river—swollen to a great depth at that time,—had not a sign of any subsidence; and they had actually to put their feet in it before there was the slightest sign of subsidence. In trying to imagine this—how many of **us** would have had the courage to step down there? But lo! A strange thing happened! They put their feet down, and the waters receded; another foot, and the waters receded; still another foot, and another, and the waters kept going down still, until at last the priests stood right in the bed of the river. All the water had gone down to the Dead Sea, five miles away. A miracle in very truth! We may perhaps understand it a little better by considering what we call second causes; because it is stated that twenty miles higher up the river, and about forty from the lake of Gennesaret, there is a very narrow gorge in the river, which bears signs of there having at some time been some physical disturbance like an earthquake, blocking the river right up to the sea of Galilee. God had timed, wonderfully timed it. The Lord is never a day behind. He is never an hour behind. In the very nick of time God works. Remember when they came out of Egypt, on the very selfsame day on which the four hundred and thirty years came to an end, the Children of Israel marched out (Edodus XII, 40, 41). God is always up to time and always will be up to time. When the hour strikes for the lease of the "Gentiles" to run out, the Great Anointed One will be ready to take unto himself his great power and reign (Revelation XI, 15). (See No. III in the Chart.)

The people of Israel watched that little band; and when the signal was given for them to go, the two million passed over the river; or, as it is recorded in the next chapter (IV, 10)—"the people hasted and passed over," as if they had run across. How they must have looked at that brave little band! If the water should return, it would be the priests that would be swept away first; but, there was the ark of the God of the Hebrews, and to sweep the priests away must be to sweep the ark away; and their confidence in God was sure and stedfast. All the people passed over; and then came twelve men, picked men, to where the priests stood in the midst of Jordan. They each took up a stone, and put it upon his shoulder, and carried it into Canaan; and there they erected an altar in remembrance to the Lord. And last of all the priests,—these were told to come out. They had to remain right on until all the people had passed over.

Such is the strange dramatic spectacle; and now let us consider the life-lessons for us. What did the passing of Jordan by the typical people symbolize? And especially what did the bearing of the ark by the priests symbolize? And why had the priests to go first into Jordan, and remain there till all the people passed over? These are subjects full of meaning, and full of interest, and full of inspiration to us.

What did Jordan and Canaan represent? You know the general idea is that Jordan represents death, and Canaan represents heaven. How often we hear that; but that idea is not the fact. When we talk about heaven, we talk about being free from care, and free from toil, and free from suffering. Did the Israelites rest in that way when they got into Canaan? No, they had to fight. They had to suffer. They had trials and toils and weary strugglings. Then Canaan cannot represent heaven. But suppose we put it this way,—that Canaan represents the new earth conditions under the administration of the Millennial Kingdom. Then, Jordan itself fitly represents the divine condemnation, the curse, the sentence against our race, which has for six thousand years hindered mankind from entering into the blessed Kingdom conditions and opportunities and blessings. In other words, Jordan represents the death-sentence; even as is implied by the root meaning of the word. "Jor" signifies "down," and "dan" signifies "judge," so that the word is simply "judged down," or "condemnation," hindering those who would be servants of God from entering into peace and rest and blessing and favour with God. Here was a goodly land barred by the condemnation.

There is a strange tale told about the writer of that song

known to us as "Home, sweet home." The writer of that song was an outcast from home. This is what suggested his writing it. He was standing out in the cold on a winter's night, and saw in a house signs of merriment, signs of joy and rejoicing; and when he went on his way in his loneliness, he wrote that song,—"Home, sweet home." So the whole human race has been barred for six thousand years by the condemnation against Adam, seeking rest, and not being able to enter into it. God has barred the way in his justice, as well as in his love. Oh! think of the perishing world, and of the great Saviour! What a contrast between the two! The whole world under the condemnation, the whole world having the way back to God barred, and then—Jesus coming, the Great and Wondrous Saviour! He could say, and rightly say too,—"**No man cometh unto the Father but by me.**"

The presence of the ark with the priests represented God's Covenant, what we call, and rightly too, the Oathbound Covenant to Abraham. The Lord himself stood in the midst of Jordan. He stepped down himself into the death condition. He gave himself a ransom for all; and by his stepping down into Jordan, he has effected the cancellation of the death-sentence,—glory be to God for that! in order that the Millennial blessings might be attained by all willing ones, under the leadership of Joshua's great antitype, Jesus himself. The ark was borne by the high priests and the under priests; and it suggests to us the thought that, the Great High Priest and the members of the Royal Priesthood must first pass into Jordan, before any of the people can pass over. The road was barred, will be barred, until all the Priests have gone down into the Jordan. The passing over, free from the divine condemnation, will be effected by the work of the Great High Priest and his associated "Brethren." He gave himself a ransom for our sins. He became a curse for us. He, as the man Christ Jesus, stopped in the midst of Jordan that the whole world might pass over,—blessed be God for that! The Royal Priesthood are following him in this sacrifice, and they too are stopping in the midst of Jordan. They also, as joint heirs with their Lord, are associated with him now in his sufferings, humiliation, and sacrifice, and afterwards will be associated with him in his glory, and in the blessing of all the families of the earth. They too are laying down their lives on behalf of the Brethren and for the truth's sake,—to the intent, that the whole world of mankind may enter into the glorious Kingdom privileges, according to the Divine arrangement. Don't misunderstand me when I say that the Royal Priesthood have to share the work of restoring and blessing mankind. We do not mean to say that the sacrifice of Jesus was incomplete, it was absolutely perfect and complete,—a complete satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. We do not want to belittle the work of our Master; but the Royal Priesthood are privileged (it is a great privilege indeed which they are allowed) to lay down their lives for the truth, to thus follow their Master, the footsteps of the Great High Priest, and be associated with him, for "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together," for "If we suffer (with him), we shall also reign with him" (Romans VIII, 16, 17; II Timothy II, 12), and God is pleased to allow us to do this. I say it is a marvellous privilege, which we should highly value. May we be enabled to rise up to it!

So the "whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," waiting, anxiously waiting "for the manifestation of the sons of God," and for the passing of the priests (Romans VIII, 22, 19).

The first work of the Israelites on entering Canaan was to renew the covenant of separateness, and then to destroy the Canaanites. In the next Age (very nigh at hand now, for "the night is far spent, the day is at hand"—Romans XIII, 12), all evil influences, selfish interests, world powers, will be destroyed; and this goodly land of promise, the whole earth, will be prepared for the restored race of mankind, and become in very truth the glory-filled earth, for "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah XXXV, 10). What a glorious prospect before the world when the priests have passed over!

THE NEED OF PATIENCE, COURAGE, AND CONFIDENCE ON THE PART OF THE PRIESTS. What an amount of courage, what an amount of confidence, what an amount of patience must the priests have had to tread in the water! Not a sign of subsidence; and only as they touched the waters, did the waters subside. What a need of patience! And Oh! Brethren, what a need of patience we have! What a need of courage! What a need of confidence in God! We shall always have the presence of the High Priest with us; that is one great blessing, and one great benefit. The under Priests have not to stand there alone: the High Priest is with them—"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age" (Matthew XXVIII, 20), so the presence of the High Priest is the source of our confidence and joy. We need never fear so long as he is with us. And then, the presence of the ark, what does that betoken us? It betokens the possession of the exceeding great and precious promises. To sweep us away, Brothers and Sisters, would be to sweep the ark away. To sweep us away, would be to sweep the High Priest away. We have that guarantee, that glorious security, in the presence of the High Priest.

Now let us look at some of the promises—"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee" (Isaiah XLIII, 2). I think that will cover all that we have to pass through, won't it? "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians X, 13). **The waters will not sweep us away.** The Lord does not deliver us **out** of trouble, but he delivers us **in** it, and he is with us through the trouble; and he has guaranteed this, not that we shall be free from trouble, not that we shall be free from trials and temptations, but that **no trial shall overtake us beyond the grace that is able to help us.** He will not suffer us to be tempted (or tried) above that we are able. There are times I believe when he has said "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm" (Psalm CV, 15), and—"Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (Job XXXVIII, 11). The Psalmist (LVI, 3), when he thought of the goodness of God, said—"What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee"—a glorious trust; and again,—"Blessed is the man whose strength (strong confidence) is in thee, and in whose heart are the ways to Zion" (Psalm LXXXIV, 5). God can hold back a trouble that we fear will sweep us away.

OUR FELLOWSHIP IN SUFFERING WITH JESUS. The Apostle Paul says—"Wherefore, Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." It is well to do so when we are troubled, when we are distressed, when we are tempted,—consider the Great High Priest what **he** passed through; how he endured contradiction of sinners against himself (Hebrews XII, 3); how, "though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered;" and even **he** "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared" (Hebrews V, 8, 7). The Apostle puts it in another place (II Corinthians IV, 11)—"For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake." We are baptized into his death, and, being planted together in the likeness of his death, we hope to be also in the

likeness of his resurrection (Romans VI, 5). And then he says in still another place—"We are made a spectacle (or as the margin puts it, we are made a theatre) unto the world, and to angels, and to men" (I Corinthians IV, 9). We are made a spectacle. We are to be fools for Christ's sake. We are made light of. The world knows us not, loves us not, appreciates us not, understands us not (I John III, 1). The sons of God are little accounted of. Though they are fine gold, they are esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter! (Lamentation IV, 2).

OUR PATIENCE AND PRESERVATION. "In your patience," says Jesus, "possess ye your souls" (Luke XXI, 19). Look at some of those strange paradoxes of the Apostle's:—"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (II Corinthians IV, 8, 9). How true that is. Is not that true of our Christian life? How surprising it is that in the very time of our deepest need the Lord himself appears for our relief and we are able to bear it.

Now, there is a strange point here. I cannot exactly dogmatise on it, but it was a blessing to me as I thought of it. There is a thought among some of our Brethren in the truth, that unless called away within the next three or four years, it will be a sign that they will not be of the Royal Priesthood, it will be a sign that God has forsaken them. Is there anything in this incident which may indicate a different view? It seems to me so, and I leave it to your earnest consideration and prayers. Here is a kingdom of priests,—mind you, the whole kingdom was a kingdom of priests (Exodus XIX, 6),—and here is a little band of priests, the most consecrated of the nation. Would it mean in any possible way that some of the most consecrated of the Lord's people will have to stop longer in Jordan than others? Remember, it is not a sign of the Lord's forsaking them, but a sign of the Lord's confidence in them. I put that to you as a matter for thought. It seems to have flashed upon my mind that there is a truth here which I had never seen before. Some of the Lord's people, perhaps, will have to go right on to the time of trouble as witnesses for the truth; and probably the last members of the Royal Priesthood, before they cross to the other side, will have to instruct the Elisha class in the work of restitution. Now I take that as the work of Elijah. You know when the prophet was in that low state, the Lord understood him. The Lord said, Now Elijah, you want rest; lie down. He found him something to eat, and he let Elijah lie down. Then, when God said—"What doest thou here, Elijah?" Elijah said—"I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only am left; and they seek my life, to take it away" (I Kings XIX, 9, 10). One of the things he was told to do, was to anoint Elisha to be "prophet in thy room" (I Kings XIX, 16); and we see that the work of Elisha was restitution work. The bitter waters of Jericho were healed; water was supplied for Jehoshaphat and the allied army; the widow's oil was multiplied; the Shunammite's son was raised from the dead; the deadly pottage was cured; one hundred men were fed with twenty loaves; Naaman was cured of leprosy; and Elisha's bones revived a dead man (I Kings II, 21; V, 27; XIII, 21). I say, it may be that the work of the last members of the Royal Priesthood will be to be instructors of the Elisha class in restitution work.

It is wonderful how lives are made sublime by sacrifices for others' sake, by patient continuance in well doing. Even the world admires self-sacrifice. In some cases they can appreciate it. They can praise the Captain of a sinking ship, who lets the woman and the children go first and he himself the last to leave the ship, and frequently his own life lost in that self-sacrifice. The people of the world can understand and appreciate that. I know my blood has often been stirred on reading in one of Macaulay's essays—"the Lays of Ancient Rome,"—how Horatius with two others kept the bridge against a whole invading army, until his friends were able to cut the bridge in two; and then how Horatius jumped into the river and got safe to shore. And then in the Swiss war of Independence, in the battle of Sempach, Arnold Winkelreid presented himself first, to the Austrian spearmen, grasped a number of their spears in his arms, and thrust them into his own heart, and fell covered with wounds, whilst his comrades rushed on the host thus temporarily embarrassed, and achieved a great victory. The world can appreciate that; but they little understand the sacrifice **we** make. They cannot appreciate that our life is one of daily martyrdom, bearing witness for the truth amidst uncongenial surroundings. The world does not understand that. They say, in the words of Judas of old—"To what purpose is this waste?" Ah! the Lord had a different opinion about that—"Let her alone, she hath done a good work upon me." And the **reward!** What many a wealthy man would now give thousands of pounds to get—"Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her" (Mark XIV, 9). The Master appreciated her devotion. The Master understands our sacrifice for the truth.

DEVELOPMENT OF PATIENCE. There is to be the development of the virtues of patience, humility, and confidence in God; but patience particularly. We have to wait God's time. I am afraid some of us are very anxious to go, and would be very glad if the Lord would send for us to-night. We are sometimes weary of the struggle, weary of the pain, weary of the lack of appreciation by the world, sometimes even by the Brethren; at times thinking that even God has forsaken us. Oh! Brethren, we have nothing to do with the time of our departure. That is the Lord's business. Our work is—"patient continuance in well doing" (Romans II, 7). The Lord will fix our time of rest; and the Lord never forgets, and the Lord never will forget. He is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love (Hebrews VI, 10). Look at the beautiful promises—"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (Isaiah XXX, 15). How often we waste our strength by trying to step in advance of the Lord, but if we could only learn that lesson we should reserve our strength for times of greatest trial. And then look at the word of Moses to the assembled Israelites at the Red Sea—"Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord" (Exodus XIV, 13). "Stand still!" It is hard to stand still. The Apostle Paul takes the same thought when he says—"having done all, to stand" (Ephesians VI, 13). It is far more difficult to patiently stand still in a dangerous position, than it is to rush into battle. It requires greater courage. It requires greater strength. It requires greater grace, and greater patience. But then, Paul again puts it—"We which have believed do enter into rest" (Hebrews IV, 3). Oh! Brethren, to enter into God's rest! We see the world around so full of sin, and full of sorrow; but still, we rest; not in indifference, no, thank God, it is not in indifference; but, we are not worrying about it, not troubling about it, because we know that God is going to put everything straight, we know that the time is at hand when the Lord Jesus will take unto himself his great power and reign (Revelation XI, 17); and what men cannot do, either by natural means or anything else, the Son of God will do; and he will do it in such a way that sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace"—again says the inspired pen—"whose mind is stayed on thee" (Isaiah XXVI. 3). There lies our peace—in quiet confidence upon God, simply, earnestly, doing our duty in our daily life. And look at it! what an example we are to others! Some will take heart and take

courage from observing our patient continuance in well doing, and wonder where we get our strength. They will wonder how it is that we are so certain, so peaceful, amidst disturbing surroundings. Oh, praise the Lord! his hand is in it—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

THE REWARD. I believe their names will be had in everlasting remembrance. Perhaps their names will be known to the world. I wonder if those whose names are now in the Lamb's Book of Life will ever be published. If they are, what an astonishment to the world! Why, the people who lived very humble lives, who were in very poor circumstances, unknown, unhonoured, not thought of, these have been held worthy to be in that immortal band! God will take care of that, because the promise still remains—"for them that honour me I will honour" (I Samuel II, 30); and judging from a passage in Revelation (III, 9) I should say that the nominal Church will get to know about it,—"Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, and do lie; behold I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." That will be an astonishment, won't it? They will say—**"Why, they were right after all, and we were wrong!"**

They will be held in everlasting remembrance; and best of all, they will be for ever with the Lord, never to be separated from the High Priest again; "and they shall see his face" (Revelation XXII, 3, 4). I think that is wonderful! That is one of the beautiful prospects before us. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew V, 8). To see Jesus (I John III, 2), to see him who gave himself a ransom for all, for "he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I John II, 2); to be with him for ever, to be past falling, shut in with him, and to be like him,—what a blessed thought!

THE TWELVE STONES. The great world-powers and associations, just like the Canaanites of old, are ignorant of the passing of the Priests; they are ignorant of the Divine Plan; they feel themselves absolutely secure in their unions and associations, and in their strength of armies and strength of navies. What will they do when the Priests have passed over, and when these stones are taken out of Jordan and lifted up to draw all men to Christ? In the type, you see twelve stones taken out of the place where the priests had stood, and erected as a memorial to all generations. The great antitype of that is not twelve stones, but twelve times twelve thousand stones, to be taken out of Jordan and placed by divine arrangement in the antitypical tabernacle, God's dwelling place on earth. And, as one of our Brethren in London has beautifully put it,—

The well-wrought stone swings into place,
No derricks' din, no clank of cranes,
No straining cables,—but by Grace,
What earth has lost, God's Temple gains.

For a silent work, unseen, unknown,
The skilful work of the Master's hand,
Was daily done on the sought-out stone,
And ever and ever that stone shall stand.

Silent as springs some tree to sky,
Smoothly as sand swirls into heaps,
The stately temple of God comes nigh,
The blind behold, and the lame man leaps.

When the last stone slides to the last-left space,
The heavens and the earth into song shall break,
For God will return to the ransom'd race,
And dwell with man for his own Name's sake.
(Revelation XXI, 3).

Again, to use another figure of speech, this great temple, like one vast stone, will fall on the feet of the "Image," and crush it to pieces; and then it will fill the whole earth; bringing world-wide blessings to mankind, good tidings of great joy to all people, when the Priests have all passed over (Daniel II, 31-45).

And so, my Brethren in the truth, standing still in Jordan, the world cares little for us, appreciates us not, understands us not, thinks our life a failure; but let us be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Men heed thee, praise thee, love thee not.
The Master praises, What are men!

The Preciousness of Christ.

By Brother Wm. W. Johnston.

THE passage of Scripture, dear friends, which furnishes the basis of our instruction and confidence, you will find in I Peter II, 7, the first clause of the verse. It reads thus:—"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." I am aware that the rendering of this passage in the Authorized Version is open to question; but whether the translation be literally accurate or not, we are none the less indebted to the translators for providing us with a theme, which will furnish food for an ample, and we trust, a profitable reflection this afternoon. The preciousness of Christ is a subject of perennial freshness. It is an inexhaustable mine of information to which we turn again and again with renewed zest, and find in it each time some new beauty to reward our ardent labours. And yet it is a subject that does not unfold its treasures to all and sundry. It requires that we should be in heart harmony with Jesus Christ in order to appreciate him. It is unto you therefore which believe, and only to such that Christ is precious.

There is no more striking figure in the history of our race than that of Jesus of Nazareth. Born, humanly speaking, of humble parentage, and raised amid lowly surroundings, it was his high privilege, nevertheless, by reason of his moral excellence and superior wisdom, to raise the level of religious thought to a plane which it had not heretofore occupied, and from which it was equally impossible for it to recede. To know Jesus Christ is at once to recognize his pre-eminence over every other religious teacher the world has ever produced. And to sit at his feet and to learn of him, is to become eternally dissatisfied with every other system of theology that the world has known. The question which he put to the Jews nearly nineteen hundred years ago: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John VIII, 46) still remains unanswered. It stands as an eternal challenge before which the moralists of all ages are reduced to silence.

But while all would readily subscribe to such a negative estimate of the character of Jesus, there are nevertheless varying degrees of positive appreciation of his unique personality, based

upon different conceptions of his life and work. For instance, there are those who hold what we might term the "Unitarian" conception of Christ. Their attention is concentrated entirely upon his life. They see him as a man among men. They see in him one who embodied in his person all the virtues and graces that pertain to the perfect type of character. Unto them, he is honourable. He is a glorious ideal, a splendid pattern, which we would all do well to copy; but his death has no charm for them. They look upon his death only as a regrettable termination to a useful career; and the manner in which it was brought about, is to them the best possible evidence of their contention that Jesus was a man who lived ahead of his time, and that he suffered the death of a martyr in a righteous cause. This is the "Unitarian" conception of Christ. There are others again who hold what we might term the "Trinitarian" conception of Christ. Their appreciation of Jesus Christ is based upon their inability to comprehend him. They hold that Jesus actually was the incarnation of Jehovah; that in the person of Jesus Christ, God the Creator, and man the creature, became so inextricably intermingled, that throughout all succeeding ages they must for ever remain inseparable. This inconceivable admixture of natures is to them the very hall-mark of religion. For them, religion begins at the unknowable. The words of our Lord to the Samaritans apply fitly to this class—"Ye worship ye know not what" (John IV, 22). Unto them, Jesus is awe inspiring. He is reverential. He is majestic; but they cannot truthfully say in the words of our text—"Unto us he is precious."

There is another class, however, whose conception of Christ is as high above the others as the heavens are above the earth. We might term them the "Nonitarians;" and if you ask me to define that term, I should say it is a compound word which I coined myself. It is composed of a latin prefix "non" signifying "not," and an English word, "tare"—"spurious wheat." They are those who have not anything of the "tare" element about them at all. I trust, dear friends, I am addressing a company of "Nonitarians." But what is **their** conception of Christ? Their's is an intelligent appreciation of Jesus Christ as he is set forth in the pages of God's Word. They see him, not as Jehovah, but as the Son of God, whose devotion to the Divine will was such a delight to the heart of the Father, that he could say of him—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; **hear ye him**" (Matthew XVII, 5). To them, Jesus is "the chiefest among ten thousand; the altogether lovely one." These are the believers mentioned in our text; and it is "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious."

Wherein consists this superior appreciation of Jesus Christ which is the exclusive privilege of believers? What is the basis of such a preciousness? As we seek to answer this question there are so many arguments, so many reasons that chase each other across our minds, each one clamouring for recognition, that the difficulty is to make such a selection as would best lay the subject before you in a comprehensive and coherent manner. We purpose, however, to select seven reasons why Christ is specially precious to the believer; and to allow the perfect number to stand as an indication of the others which time will not permit us to go into.

Naturally the first reason that suggests itself to our minds is that, Christ is precious to us because he is **our REDEEMER.** Any appreciation of the life and work of Jesus Christ which does not include his work of "atonement" is lacking in the one element which is essential to a due estimate of its importance. It may be a paradox, dear friends, but it is true none the less, that the most important event in the life of Jesus Christ—and we need to emphasise this, in these days when men are denying the Lord that bought them,—the most important event in the life of Jesus Christ was his death; for in that death, God was dealing with the question of man's sin. Sin had raised an impenetrable barrier between God and man. It barred the way of man's approach unto God. It interposed a most effectual veto upon the benevolent intentions of the Creator towards his creature. As long as man remained a transgressor, there was but one thing that God could mete out to him, and that was, death,—"The wages of sin is death" (Romans VI, 23); and while man remains a transgressor, while sin remains in evidence, death must of necessity reign supreme. This seems to have been the thought in the mind of the Apostle Paul when he penned I Corinthians XV, 56,—"The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law." Now what is it, dear friends, that stings particularly about death? It is the knowledge that it is the total cessation of being, that there is—"no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest" (Ecclesiastes IX, 10); that in the day a man "returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Psalm CXLVI, 4). That is what stings about death. There are many good Christians who spend the greater part of their lifetime dodging that sting, but sooner or later it gets at them in a vital part, and their last argument is silenced. But what adds venom to the sting, is the knowledge that this death, this cessation of being, is the result of sin; and that while sin remains, death must also remain; that if sin remains during all eternity then for all eternity the sinner must remain in the grave. But some one says—**"How is the law the strength of sin?"** We answer, that the law is the strength of sin because the standard of its requirements was so high, that for four thousand years it was found utterly impossible for any man to reach up to that standard. There was none who could deliver his own soul from the grave. There was none who could redeem his brother nor give a ransom for him (Psalm XLIX, 7); but, as our brother said yesterday afternoon, "man's extremity became God's opportunity," and what man could not accomplish for himself, God wrought out for him, in the person of Jesus Christ our Saviour; and so we can join with the Apostle Paul in the language of exultation—"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians XV, 57).

How has Christ obtained the victory for us? How did he give us the victory over death? Did he instruct us that we had been labouring under a delusion for a long time? Did he gather his disciples together and say to them something like this:—"Don't you know that the world of mankind has been mistaken in this matter regarding death? It is most absurd to talk about dying. Don't you know you are immortal and cannot possibly die?" No, he did not say anything like that. He knew better. It was not in any of his teachings, it was not in any act of his life, that the Lord Jesus secured for us the victory over death and the grave; but it was in his death that he triumphed over sin and over Satan. Sin and death are related to each other as cause and effect; and our Lord Jesus abolished the effect by removing the cause, as we read in Hebrews IX, 26—"Once in the end of the age hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" and in thus putting away sin, he at one and the same time abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (II Timothy I, 10). Well may we join in the Apostle's exultant language and exclaim with him—"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians XV, 55-57). Christ is precious to us, dear friends, because we owe to him our very existence. Had he not hung upon Calvary's tree, we must have remained for ever in the grave. But just as truly as he has risen from the grave, just so truly must the world of mankind be delivered from the bondage of death. The law which formerly frowned upon the sinner has become the very ground-work of his deliverance. Now that Christ has put away the transgression, the law demands that those for whom the sacrifice was made should be delivered from the bonds of death, and should have an opportunity to hear in order to believe, that they may have that life

which is held out to them through Christ. The Lord himself said—"What shall a man give in exchange for his soul (life)?" (Matthew XVI, 26). Life is the most precious of all things to us; and if Christ has given us life, if he has redeemed us from the power of the grave, he is indeed the very greatest of benefactors. Surely this in itself would cause us readily to subscribe to the language of our text—"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious."

The second reason which we would offer for the preciousness of Christ is, because he is **our LORD.** There is a theory of judgment, dear friends, which is well known to students of Oriental religion. It is a theory of payment by merit. It is termed the "doctrine of the transmigration of souls." It teaches that man at death is recompensed by reappearing on the stage of life on a higher or lower plane of being, according as he has used or abused his previous opportunities. That is to say, that the low caste man who has made the best use of his previous opportunities, would in all probability reappear as a high caste man: or if he had been very good he might become a spirit being. If, on the contrary, he had abused his opportunities, misused his privileges, he would reappear in the form of a horse or a dog; or if he had been particularly vile he might become an insect of some kind. This principle of reward according to merit, is the sum of human effort in feeling after God; but when God deigns to reveal himself to us in the person of Jesus Christ, the question of human merit vanishes into the background, and God opens the store-house of his grace, and pours out upon us favour upon favour.

We have seen how God has provided for us the initial grace of redemption, and we feel if it were for nothing else but this, we should be compelled to offer him our everlasting gratitude. And this grace we receive, not because of any merit in ourselves for—"God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans V, 8). When the Gibeonites found that the bitterness of death was passed, and that Joshua with the princes of the congregation of Israel did not intend to mete out to them that death which they merited, because of their deception, they were exceedingly grateful to him, and they accepted gladly the menial position assigned to them as hewers of wood and drawers of water to the congregation of Israel. This might well be our position. Were it only for the fact that Jesus Christ had given us life, we would feel it incumbent upon ourselves to be his slaves, and to serve him, the holy angels, and all the holy ones throughout eternity. We would feel it to be our duty to be the servants of Jesus Christ, and to receive gladly whatever post he might allot to us in the scheme of salvation; but our Lord Jesus says—"I call you not servants; Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John XV, 14, 15). And when we hear the voice of our Lord Jesus speaking to us in this way, there is but one answer we can return, and that is the answer of the Apostle Paul—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts IX, 6). Yes, dear friends, this is the position that we are invited to take up.

Our Lord's invitation comes to us on a two-fold basis—(a) The basis of what he has done for us; and (b) the basis of what he is still going to do for us. (a)—The former is embodied in that familiar passage in Romans XII, 1—"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,"—by that initial grace of redemption, by all that that grace has already wrought through Christ on your behalf,—"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your **reasonable service.**" The Apostle tells us that this is our reasonable service.

Some years ago, dear friends, I was what I might term an inveterate novel reader. I suppose that some of you, like myself, have cause to regret the time you have spent in such intellectual dissipation. I remember, however, that there was a marked similarity about the stories which I read. As a rule, the hero rescued the heroine from a watery grave, or by stopping a runaway team when it was about to dash over a precipice. This formed an introduction; and in due time they were married and lived happy ever after. You could usually tell what was going to happen. Whenever we met the runaway team, we knew that the wedding bells would ring in the last chapter; and if it did not, we were somewhat disappointed, and began to think there was a conspiracy on the part of the author and publisher to cheat us out of our money. Why? Because we recognized it as a right principle, as the right thing to expect, that the saved life belongs to the saviour. We looked for such reasoning even in our romances. Dear friends, I want to tell you that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on our behalf is the greatest romance that ever was written in the history of literature; and its value is the greater because it is absolutely true in every detail. We belong to the Lord Jesus by right of purchase. We belong to him by right of salvation; and if we seek to retain our lives and apply them to purposes of our own, we violate the principles of equity and justice. We belong to God. We are not our own. We are bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ (I Corinthians VI, 19, 20). God might well have demanded our obedience. He might have said—"You cannot now recall the purchase. I have paid the price in the sacrifice of my Son, and you must obey me, and you must present your bodies a living sacrifice." But he does not. No. He comes and beseeches our acquiescence in his plan of salvation. He says through the Apostle—"I **beseech** you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice."

(b)—Again, in the fourteenth chapter of John, twenty-third verse, we have the other basis of appeal, namely, as to what God is willing to do for us through Jesus Christ. Our Lord himself there says—"If a man love me he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." How our hearts have filled with desire as we have read the story of that home in Bethany; and we have pictured to ourselves the two sisters and Lazarus sitting together with the Master. We have thought within ourselves—Oh! how I would have liked to have been there! What a privilege to have sat with Mary at Jesus' feet and to have listened to the gracious words that fell from his lips, or with Martha to have spread the table for the Lord of glory! What a joy to have listened while the brother whom Jesus loved discoursed with his Lord weighty problems arising out of the Law, etc.! But I want to tell you my dear friends, that you can entertain royal guests every day, that you can have the Father and Son with you every day. "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him; and we will come unto him, and **make our abode with him.**" Surely gladness will have come to stay in our hearts if the Father and the Son are dwelling therein! "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we,—even we,—should be called the sons of God" (I John III, 1).

How is it that we find ourselves transferred to this place of favour in the bosom of the Father, the place which was occupied formerly by the Son of God himself? Is it because of anything in us? Is it because of any merit that we possess? Why, no, dear friends. The Apostle tells us in Romans V, 1—"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." We have seen that already, in considering the first point, the preciousness of our Lord as the Redeemer. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, "by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (verse 3). But God's grace does not end even there, for being in this grace wherein we now stand, we "rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." **It is in the merit of Jesus Christ,** dear friends, **that we are rescued from death;** that we have been taken from the fearful pit, and from the miry clay; and it is by the same merit that we have entered into all the privileges of the sons of God.

The third reason which I would offer for the preciousness of Christ to believers is, because he is **our IDEAL.** A proper appreciation of Jesus Christ is the outcome of the experience of a lifetime, and because of this fact, such appreciation must of necessity be a progressive development. I have no hesitation in saying, therefore, that the appreciation of Christ as our ideal is an advanced stage of Christian experience. When first our attention was attracted to Christ, we saw him with outstretched arms on the cross of Calvary, nailed to that cruel tree by our sins; and as we looked there upon him, our hearts were filled with such abounding gratitude, that we readily complied with his invitation to present ourselves in sacrifice, and to acknowledge him as our Lord and Master.

See from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down,
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small,
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands myself, my life, my all.

Having thus become part of the flock of the good Shepherd, he leads us into green pastures and beside still waters; and under his guidance and instructions, seeds of godliness,—the last vestige of that Divine image which was originally upon man, and which had long lain dormant under the debris of worldliness and selfishness,—these seeds are quickened into life by the power of Christ, and they sprout and send forth tender shoots of holy aspiration and righteous desire. We begin to love righteousness and hate iniquity, under the tuition of our Lord and Master. And as we are thus quickened by the spirit of holiness, we begin to see Jesus in a new light. We see him encircled with a halo of righteousness, invested with a new beauty, the beauty of holiness. We see him, not only as the channel of Divine benevolence, but as the embodiment of all those sterling virtues which are elemental factors in the composition of the Divine holiness. Our appreciation of Christ has deepened and widened. We see him, not only as the one who gave us life, not only as the one who has rescued us from the grave, but we see him as the embodiment of these new-born desires and holy aspirations which have been begotten in us by the Holy Spirit of God; and as we look upon him in this new light—Philippians II, 5, becomes the motto of our lives—"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

I pause here, dear friends, to put a personal question to you. Has that been your experience? Have you reached this stage of Christian development? Is Christ your ideal? Does he embody all the desires of your heart? Have you set Christ on the pinnacle of your aspirations? If you cannot answer that question in the affirmative, then I want to tell you that you have some way to go yet. It is a grand thing to know that we have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. It is a grander thing to know that we are no longer reckoned as human beings, but that God is looking at us through the merit of Christ as one of his Spiritual Sons. But I want to tell you, dear friends, that these favours are but the platform along which we must proceed to affinity with Christ; and if we do not realize that, then we are receiving the grace of God in vain. This is God's desire for all of us. Let me illustrate this in a homely way: Within a month or two, the brothers will be thinking of Spring suits; and when they go to the tailor or hatter, they will find that, Fashion, that unbending autocrat, has decreed that they must wear a certain cut of coat or a certain style of hat; and if they do not comply with its demands, they will be regarded as behind the times. If they are sufficiently interested in the matter to enquire why it should be so, they would probably find that for some reason, good, bad, or indifferent, King Edward or some other one high in authority had worn this particular style of hat, or this particular style of coat, and therefore, all his dutiful and loyal subjects must follow suit,—literally and metaphorically. Dear friends, the King of heaven set the fashion of character in the person of Jesus Christ; and that fashion must ultimately prevail throughout all his dominion. He has set before us a great ideal in the person of Christ; and you and I must conform to his decree. It is our privilege now to put on Christ, to become conformed to God's fashion, to become conformed to the image of his dear Son; and as we thus walk in daily communion with our Lord Jesus Christ, with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord, we are changed indeed into his image from glory to glory (II Corinthians III, 18). Christ is precious to us, exceedingly precious to us, because he is our ideal. We desire to be and we hope to be all that he now is.

The fourth reason which we would offer for the preciousness of Christ to believers is, because he is **our BURDEN-BEARER.** As we thus seek to walk in daily communion with our Lord, there is a heavenly joy and peace that fills our hearts to overflowing; and yet we are conscious that the path along which we tread is a strait and narrow path, that there are many obstacles to be overcome ere we reach the heights of glory where God dwells. There are various burdens that press upon us, more or less heavily, and these may be summed up under three heads:—(1) The burden of human weakness and imperfection. (2) The burden of divinely imposed chastisements and disciplinary afflictions. (3) The burden of persecution and reproach of men. With regard to the first, **the burden of human imperfection:**—When we see the standard which God has set up in Christ Jesus, we are almost filled with dismay, we become discouraged. It would seem as if we never could reach up to the high measure which he has set before us. We are inclined to say in the words of the prophet Job (XLII 5, 6)—"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eyes seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself." It is only as we get a proper view of Jesus Christ that we are able to measure ourselves; and as we do measure ourselves by Jesus Christ, we see how far short we come of God's requirements. It would seem as if there was a great gulf fixed between us and our ideal. How is it possible for this wreck of sin to be transformed into the image of God? How is it possible to get up yonder where Christ stands? And just at this point in our experience, we hear behind us the voice of the prophet Isaiah speaking, and it is these familiar words that fall upon our ears:—"He was wounded for our trangressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (LIII 5, 6). Oh! thank God, dear friends, for the provision he has made for our overcoming in Christ Jesus! Yes, Lord, we do believe. Yes, Lord, we have faith to believe, that our weaknesses are atoned for by the merit of Christ's sacrifice. But how are we going to get up yonder where Christ is? Again we hear another voice speaking to us; and this time close by, it is the familiar tones of the Master himself: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew XI, 29, 30). Yes, that is it. Most gladly will we lay the burden of our responsibility upon our Lord and Head. We will come, in the language of the Psalmist, with large petitions—"Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law. Make me to go in the paths of thy commandments. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity" (Psalm CXIX, 34-37). When we recognize what Christ has gone through for us, we

will lay the burden of human imperfection and weakness upon him. We will make full surrender of ourselves to him, and ask him to work in us according to the mind and will of God. Christ is precious, then, because he has borne for us, and is bearing for us, the burden of our imperfections.

The second burden to which we wish to refer, is **the burden of Divinely imposed afflictions and chastisements.** We are glad to know that our Heavenly Father is not over-indulgent: that he will afflict us with the rod, when he thinks it is necessary. I feel quite sure that if I were to go round this room and ask each of you if you had reason to rejoice because of the afflictions of God, you would immediately answer, Yes. I am sure we can look back upon our experiences and bless God for the time when he used the rod as a mark of his disapproval of our course, and called us back to the right path when we had erred. We are glad to know that we have not an over-indulgent Father. He gives us these chastisements, because—"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" (Hebrews XII, 6, 7).

There are also the afflictions which come to us in our Christian experience, not necessarily as the result of sin. These are simply the means which God in his wisdom uses to develop in us certain graces, to bring out in us that which he knows is lying dormant there. We know that this was the experience of our Lord. For instance: when he was tempted in the wilderness, we see there, Divinely permitted affliction; again, in that experience in Gethsemane, and in that last sad hour when all the disciples forsook him and fled. If the Son of God was made perfect through sufferings (Hebrews II, 10), shall you or I complain at the afflictions that come to us in seeking to be his footstep followers? Why, we read that he trod the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with him (Isaiah LXIII, 3); but not so you and I. We do not tread the wine-press alone, for the Lord himself said—"Lo, I am with you alway even to the end of the age" (Matthew XXVIII, 20). We have an Apostle and High Priest of our profession, who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, because he himself has passed through them (Hebrews III, 1; IV, 14, 15). In every time of trouble, and in every time of trial, whether it be because of sin or whether it be those disciplinary afflictions which God imposes upon us for our edification, we can turn to our Lord and Saviour and find in him that sympathy, that grace, which will enable us to triumph, and to rejoice in our tribulation. Christ is precious to us, dear friends, because he is our burden-bearer in these afflictions.

The other burdens which press upon us in our Christian way, are **the burdens of persecution and reproach of men.** It is still true, dear friends, that—"all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy III, 12). The Spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world are as opposite as the poles. They are naturally antagonistic; and they can no more be assimilated than fire and water. As we have the spirit of Christ, and as we seek to live godly, we shall have persecution in the world but here too our Lord comes to our aid. You remember his own words, when he assured us that we would have such a hard time. He said—"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John XVI, 33). Thank God; if we are in Christ we can overcome the world. If the love of Christ is filling our hearts, if the preciousness of Christ is appealing to our souls, we will consider these things—worldly reproaches and persecutions—as nothing compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us—"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans VIII, 18). We shall count it a privilege to have fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, and be made conformable to his death, as the Apostle again says in Philippians (III, 8, 11)—"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things. . . . That I might know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Christ is precious then, to us, dear friends, exceedingly precious to us, because he is our burden bearer in these three senses.

The fifth reason which we would offer for the preciousness of Christ is, because he is **our ADVOCATE.** In seeking to bring about the restoration of the moral equilibrium of the universe disturbed by the Fall, there is an important factor which requires complete and continual satisfaction, the factor of Divine justice. Justice is the foundation of God's throne; it is the basis of his sovereign right to rule over creation, as we read in Psalm LXXXIX, 14—"Justice and judgment are the habitation (margin—establishment—foundation) of thy throne." We are glad that this is so, because this very fact is to us the best assurance of the eternal happiness of every creature of God's dominion. It was the necessity for satisfying Divine justice which required that Christ should be "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation XIII, 8). It was because God could look away to Calvary and see with the fullest confidence, with the fullest assurance, Christ hanging there on behalf of the human race, that he was able at all to have any dealings with sinful men, and accept from their hands such transitory reminders of the great and perfect sacrifice, as the blood of bulls and goats. It is for this reason also, dear friends, because we have again come into touch with Divine justice, that you and I require an advocate. We do require an advocate in the presence of the justice of God, to plead our cause. When the work of the Millennial Age is complete, when the Kingdom of God has prevailed on the earth for one thousand years, and mankind has been restored to that perfection of being and character which was God's original intention—"Then cometh the end, when he (Jesus) shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Corinthians XV, 24-26). At that time man shall stand upon his own merit before God, because he will have been so changed, he will have been so educated and uplifted, that he will not require the services of an Advocate at the bar of Divine justice. In harmony with this we read in Revelation XX 7, 8—"And when the thousand years are expired (when all men are brought to perfection as the result of Christ's reign), Satan shall be loosed out of his prison (where he had been bound for these thousand years—see verses 2 and 3), and shall go out to deceive the nations"—and test them to see whether they will remain righteous. But those whom God is now choosing out during this Gospel Age, have this post-millennial perfection already imputed to them.

By faith God looks upon you and me as if we had already attained to this perfect condition; and his purpose in thus imputing to us such perfection of being is, that we may lay down our perfect lives in sacrifice, as co-sacrificers with Jesus Christ. But we know that we have not yet apprehended that for which we are apprehended of God in Christ Jesus. Paul says—"Not as though I had already attained (perfection), either were already perfect: but I follow after (perfection), if that I may apprehend (lay hold on) that (perfection) for which also I am apprehended (laid hold upon and reckoned perfect) of Christ Jesus" (Philippians III, 12). We know that this perfection is only imputed. It is not actual; and if we had not an advocate in the presence of the Father—swift vengeance must follow on the first transgression. But if we sin, "we have an advocate with the Father,

Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John II, 1). Then let Satan deride and scorn us! Let him exaggerate our weaknesses, and magnify our imperfections, and bring all the charges he possibly can against us, **Christ is our advocate!** The blood of Jesus is our defence:—"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Romans VIII, 33, 34). Therefore, we are assured—"he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews VII 25). My dear friends, how far down are you in the scale of Christian experience? How far are you from the perfect pattern which God has set up? How much of this salvation do you expect to get? I want to tell you, dear friends, he will mete out to you if you have faith, just as much as will bring you up to that perfect standard. The Apostle assures us—that Christ can save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him (Jesus), and that he ever liveth to make intercession for us. Surely, this is another valid reason why Christ is precious to those who believe.

The sixth reason which I would offer for the preciousness of Christ to the believer is, because he is **our JUDGE.** When I voice this reason, there will, perhaps, be some who will say "Not so. God is our judge, not Christ." I know that this is a point of dispute amongst some of the Brethren. We are both right. The Scriptures distinctly teach that both God and Christ are judging, not only the Church, but will ultimately judge the whole world of mankind. In the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, the twenty-third verse, we find there, God described as the judge of all; while it is just as emphatically declared and as clearly stated in the fifth chapter of John, twenty-second verse,—"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Again, in Acts XV, 14, Simeon declares—"how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name"—a people to bear the name of Christ; and if we turn to Ephesians V, 25-27, we shall see just as clearly that the work of selection and sanctification is the work of Christ. These verses read—"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify it and cleanse it with washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." How are we to reconcile these contradictory statements? We answer, that the reconciliation is effected by a proper appreciation of the relationship existing between God and Christ; and that relationship is elaborated in I Corinthians VIII, 6—"to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we by him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." That is to say, that in all God's works, both in creation and redemption, God is the author, and Jesus Christ has been and ever will be, the agent by which the Divine purposes are accomplished. It is only as we keep this in mind, this relationship existing between the Father and the Son, that we can understand the language of Scripture; for we find the same titles applied in the Scriptures to both.

Not only is this true of the judgment as we have seen in the passages quoted, but there are other works which are spoken of in the same way. For instance, in Genesis I, 1, God is said to be the creator of all; while it is just as clearly stated in Colossians I, 15, 16 that Christ created all things,—"Who (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature; for by him were all thing created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him." In I Timothy I, 1—God is said to be our Saviour—"Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour," while in II Timothy I, 9, 10 the same Apostle assures us that Christ is our Saviour—"Who (God) hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which he hath given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." These contradictions vanish into thin air when we remember that God is the author, and Christ the agent, in all the Divine work. I will give you an illustration. In business, supposing there is a pair of boots to be made. The employer designs the shape of the last; he provides the machinery, and the leather, and takes the responsibility for the finished article. He is very properly described as a "boot-maker;" and yet the probability is that he did not make the boots. On the contrary, he would turn the work over to a workman of his, and the workman would put into operation the power which the employer had supplied. He would take the employer's material, he would form the leather into the shape of the last which the employer had designed; and when the work was completed and the boots laid on the bench, the man would very properly be described as a "bootmaker." Now, we see the term "bootmaker" might apply just as properly to the employer as to the workman; and so it is, that the term, Judge, Creator, Saviour, which are applied both to the Father and to Christ, are properly applied. We have only to take this reasonable view of the matter in order to dispel the seeming contradictions that exist.

It is the failure to observe this distinction that has caused men to have such peculiar ideas of Jesus Christ. They have looked upon him as a dual entity, as God-man. It is the failure to observe this distinction which has caused them to place Christ in the position of a usurper of Divine authority and prerogative, and also to view him in the impossible position of being his own father; but when we see that Christ is the agent, and God the author, of all things, then we have a harmonious interpretation of the whole. As our Lord Jesus said—"I and my Father are one,"—not in substance,—that is unreasonable, just as unreasonable as it is unscriptural,—but one in purpose, one in design, one in character, in desire. The judgment of the Church is no exception to the general rule. God has committed all judgment unto the Son, and judges all through him. "It has pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead that in all things he might have the pre-eminence" (Colossians I, 19, 18). Therefore, as the Apostle reminds us—"we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (II Corinthians V, 10). If we turn to the second and third chapters of Revelation, we shall see there a prophetic picture of the Church throughout the period of the whole Gospel Age in seven different stages, the seven letters to the Churches. There we find Christ at work, judging the Church; and we find him using the first personal pronoun throughout. He says—"I know thy works. I have somewhat against thee. I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." He says—"To him that evercometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also evercame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

We are glad to know, dear friends, that the work of our judgment is in the hands of Christ. We are glad to know that Christ is our judge. We see in it another reason for his preciousness to those who believe. Why? Because we have learned to associate Jesus Christ, not so much with the sterner elements of the character of God, but with the fulness of mercy, with love and grace, that fulness of God which was revealed only through him. We know the necessity of God's justice. We know that if the holiness of the universe is to be attained and maintained, that it must be established on the basis of Divine justice; but we do not want to deal with God along

that line. Christ has met all its requirements for us. We would rather deal with God's mercy. We know the necessity of Mount Sinai; but we do not want to meet the Lord there, We would rather meet him in the Holy of Holies in the person of our Advocate, our High Priest, before the blood-sprinkled mercy seat where God is waiting to be gracious. And thank God we can thus meet him in Christ Jesus. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews X, 31). But if we come to God through Christ, we shall find justice tempered with mercy, and we shall have our weakness taken into consideration. We are glad to know that Christ is our judge, because he himself has passed through our experiences. He has passed through our environment; and he knows all the difficulties by the way. He has an experimental knowledge of these trials and difficulties; and we are glad to know that our judgment is in his hands. Unto you therefore which believe; Christ is precious because he is our judge.

And lastly, dear friends, Christ is precious to us because he is **our BRIDEGROOM.** Have you ever had a wedding in your house?. I suppose most of you have, and you remember that for six months you lived in an atmosphere of subdued excitement. It began with the announcement of the engagement. Of course, everybody knew that it was going to come off, and they were not surprised; but immediately the engagement was announced, the young couple became at once the object of interest to all their relations and friends. The sewing machine began to rattle merrily in the house, and wonderful garments began to appear upon the scene; and by and by, after the great preparations were over, the day of the happy event came along, and the bride and bridegroom went off to their new home amid the acclamations of all the immediate friends of the family. After it was all over, there was still an outer circle of distant friends who did not know anything about it, till they saw the advertisement in the newspapers. When they did learn, however, they were none the less glad that the young couple had been made happy.

Dear friends, this is an illustration of a grand and glorious spiritual truth. We are engaged to a Heavenly Bridegroom. While it is true that the bride of Christ is a company, the dignity of that company rests upon every individual member of it. You and I have to regard ourselves as if we, and we alone, had the chance of being the bride of Christ. You and I have to live up to the honour which is being conferred upon us. When did our engagement begin? When we went down into the waters of baptism, we proclaimed to men and to angels that we had become engaged to the Lord Jesus Christ. Henceforth, we were set apart for him; from that very moment the work of preparation began. The bridegroom provided us with a beautiful bridal garment. It was a a robe of linen of the finest texture, pure and white as the driven snow. It is known as —"The Robe of Christ's Righteousness." And more than that, there was a pattern on the garment, which he had stamped with his own hand. It was a beautiful pattern. Would you like to hear it detailed, dear friends? Let me tell you. It had for a centre-piece a white rose—the emblem of the pure unsullied love of God. It was crossed on the right with a red carnation—the emblem of sacrifice; and on the left, with a violet—the emblem of patience; and overshadowing all these, was a large white lily—the emblem of purity of thought and intent. These encompassed by two sprigs of laurel—emblematic of victory—were set in a chain of ivy leaves—the emblem of faith—which encircled the garment. It is a beautiful pattern is it not, dear friends. And the beauty of it lies in the knowledge that it represents to us, in symbol, the character of the bridegroom himself; and as a test of our affection he desires us to embroider this pattern upon the garment which he himself has provided. He desires us, by his grace, to develop within ourselves these graces which are inherent in him, so that we may indeed be a help meet for Christ, so that we may be found worthy of the honour being conferred upon us.

What were the thoughts that filled the mind of the bride in our illustration as she diligently applied needle and thread in her work of preparation? Was she thinking of the joys of her girlhood, and of the old home she would have to leave behind? Was she thinking of the pain of parting with friends and acquaintances dear to her? Not at all. At that time she did not give those she left behind a thought. Her heart and mind were filled with the joy that would be hers when she became Mrs. Somebody else. Her mind was occupied with visions of the time when she should stand by the side of her loved one, and hear the word pronounced which should make them forever one; with the future joy which should be hers when as his bride she should share his happiness and reign as queen in his home. And, dear friends, as you and I engage in our work of preparation for our Heavenly Bridegroom, what are the thoughts that fill our hearts? Are we allowing our thoughts to dwell upon the present transitory things of life which must be left behind? Are we mourning worldly joys, worldly aspirations or ambitions formerly surrendered, or are our thoughts away where Christ is? Are we looking forward to that time when, as members of his bride we shall share with him in his joy, in his glory? When we shall share his nature we shall be like him, as we read in first John, III, 2—"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Oh how rich the promise! May God send it home to each of our hearts! May it be the moving power in our lives, to bring out in us the graces of Christ!

The days of waiting are about at an end; soon the last member of the body of Christ will be glorified, and then the marriage of the Lamb will take place. I always think I can detect a note of exultation in the words of the angel to John the Revelator—"Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Revelation XXI, 9); as if he were so anxious to display the beauties and glories that pertain to the bride of Christ, the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem. The holy ones will rejoice at the marriage of the Lamb, as we read—"Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels" (Hebrews XII, 22). We know also that there will be an outer circle of friends and acquaintances of the bride, who won't know anything about the matter until it is all over; but although they will not discover till then that the marriage has taken place, nevertheless, they will "be glad and rejoice because the marriage of the Lamb came; and the bride had made herself ready." I refer to the whole world of mankind, who are going to be blessed through the marriage of the Lamb. They will know that the bride hath made herself ready. They will know that the Church of Christ has been glorified; and they will rejoice because of the blessings which will come to them through that wedding—"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb came and his wife had made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Revelation XIX, 6-8, Diaglott).

And now, just a final word and I am done. Someone may say—"Don't you make too much of Christ. Is it not the case rather, that Christ came to reveal God to us; and should we not allow our thoughts to dwell upon God?" Dear friends, you cannot think too much of the preciousness of Christ. I want to tell you that the only way you can realize the Father, is to dwell on the preciousness of Christ, because in Jesus Christ, the Father was brought down to the level of our comprehension. Apart

from him, we should never have known the Father. He himself says—"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John XIV, 6). As we look upon Jesus, as we see all the beauties of that character which he displayed, we see in him the reflection of the Father, God made manifest in the flesh (I Timothy III, 16). May he then be the centre of our affections! May he be the inspiration of every thought, word, and action! May he be the guiding star of our lives, and the hope of our future blessedness; and as we thus dwell upon the preciousness of Christ, we shall not only know the Son, but the Father also. We shall rejoice and be glad in the riches of his grace, in the abundance of his love which not only gave Christ to die for us, but revealed him as the door by which we may enter into hallowed relationship, into the closest possible relationship with the Father himself. May God help us to appreciate to the fullest, the preciousness of Christ.

Amen.

My Saviour is precious to me,
Unspeakably precious is He;
I have yielded my all in response to His call,
Forsaking the world His to be.
In the banquet of love He has guided my feet,
In His presence to feast on the finest of wheat.

Secure in His tender embrace,
I rest at the fountain of grace;
'Neath its life-giving flow I am kept here below,
In the sight of His glorious face.
O, so peerless the beauty in Jesus I see,
That I cry out in wonder "How could He love me!"

Our Present Resurrection in Christ.

By Brother J. Hemery.

WE all hope for a resurrection to come. That is the great thing for which we do hope, that we may know him, our Lord and Master, and the power of his resurrection, that we, with him, may be changed into glory. We have not a hope nor a longing to remain in our present condition, but we have a "hope set before us," rooted and grounded in the mind of each, that when we have run our course here we may realize that resurrection which our Heavenly Father has promised to us, and that we may find ourselves in glory with our dear Lord and with our dear Father. But though there is the resurrection at the end of our course, there is a present resurrection with Christ. You remember the Apostle says "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above" (Colossians III, 1), and in another place "Ye are buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are raised with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Colossians II, 12), again, writing to the Ephesians (II, 6) he says that God "hath raised us up together (with Christ) and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." It is quite apparent then that there is a resurrection with Christ here and now, as well as the resurrection which shall change this body of humiliation, and make us like our dear Lord, when we shall see him as he is.

Dear brethren, our talk to-night is to be on our present resurrection, and my desire is that we may talk together for a time over the subjects of these texts, and that the thoughts may quicken our minds and our spirits, that we may learn as much as possible of the present power of the resurrection of Christ, and that we may be helped to gain all our present inheritance. We have a great inheritance before us, in heaven, dear brethren; but we have a present inheritance, and I hope and believe that the Heavenly Father will be with us while we talk of these things, and that we shall be helped to a better and clearer understanding of the hope of glory which is presently working in us.

Now it is quite apparent that our views of the present resurrection which is spoken of in Christ, must be modified or affected by our ideas of our Heavenly Father's plan. If we think that God has no particular purpose in our salvation but to save souls from eternal torment, no great idea can be put into the words that we are now raised to newness of life in Christ, and seated together with him in heavenly places. Therefore you find that those who do not understand the plan of God rarely see these texts, they have no particular place for them; and to them the newness of life merely means, that whereas they were sinners, now they are living a better life. It may be only the higher moral life, but they think they are living in harmony with God, and, therefore, some sort of resurrection life.

Others again have seen that our Heavenly Father has more in his Word than mere belief in Jesus Christ; they see that there is something further than saying "I believe that Jesus died for me." They have seen the passages we have quoted, and have read the epistles, and have seen that God desires holiness worked out in the lives of those who come unto Jesus now; and seeing this they have thought that by this present resurrection is meant "a life of holiness." Well, so it is. But it is something more. Not understanding the Heavenly Father's purpose, they have not seen the High-calling, with its necessary development of character, and therefore they have thought that if they put out one act of faith, they will by that, be lifted out of the sinful condition of the world into that which is called the "higher life." They can hardly define this "higher life," and it is difficult for others to do so. It seems a sort of spiritual monkhood. They desire to have little communion with flesh and blood except that which is absolutely necessary for their sustenance, or for such things as daily life entails upon them; they believe that to free the believer from sin, is the only end of Christ's present work in the heart.

Well now, dear Brethren, it is good to have anything that keeps us from sin, but I have noticed, and I have no doubt that you also have, that many of these good people have a measure of spiritual pride. Failing to perceive the plan of God, yet seeing that there is something in the New Testament demanding the separation of the Church from the world, they have forsaken the outward tokens of the world. By distinctive dress or by other means which seemed to mark a difference from their fellows, they have proclaimed their holiness, and quite apparently, many have thought they were thus seated with Christ in heavenly places of religious experience.

Then there are others who have carried the thought of resurrection further than this. They have reasoned:—"As the Scriptures speak of a present resurrection with Christ, it must be that we have **the** resurrection life here and now." Claiming

to be raised with Christ, they claim to live a life of perfection, perfection of deed, and thought, and will; that they have got to the very highest standard God has to give them, the change that is to come being only of condition, not of standing. The resurrection to come cannot make them better, because they are already perfect. Well, this is an old cry. Paul had to deal with this in his day. You remember he tells Timothy to beware of some who say that the resurrection is past already; and he mentions two by name—Hymenaeus and Philetus (II Timothy II, 17, 18). They said they had got into the resurrection life. If a man thinks that he has perfection, if he thinks he has all the Heavenly Father has for him, there is not much room for faith; faith has no further operation in him; and therefore he is made at once an easy prey to the enemy of his soul. Now, dear Brethren, while the Scriptures speak to us of a resurrection life, they do not carry either the lower thought or these supposed higher thoughts.

What, then, is our present resurrection? Paul, writing to the Romans (VI, 4) says that "God hath raised us into newness of life," mark, not fulness of life. How are we to tell what the resurrection is? He gives us a very good pointer. He says we are raised **with** Christ. Now, you see, that **newness of life must be something more than mere change in the moral character.** It must be something more than—"Whereas I had evil desires working in my mind, now I have good desires, wishing to be holy." It must be something more than holiness, for Jesus was holy before he was raised. Therefore, if we are raised with Christ, it must be something more than mere change of our course of life, and more than holiness. What can it be? Well, we inquire "To what was our dear Lord raised?" We are to be raised with him ultimately, to be in the likeness of his resurrection, and if we are raised with him now, we must, in measure, be raised in his likeness. Our Lord Jesus was put to death in flesh, but he was raised in Spirit; and therefore, if we are raised with him, **our present resurrection is in some sort a resurrection to spirit conditions.**

That is the main thought that I want to get into all our minds. Our Lord was changed from weakness to power. He was changed from mortal to immortal. But the great difference is that, in his resurrection he was changed from a human being into a spirit being; and it is the thought of our being raised with him into spiritual life that I want to talk about particularly. If he is raised in this way, and if we are raised with him, ours must also be on a spiritual basis. And so the Apostle, writing to the Ephesians (I, 3), says we are blessed with him and in him with all spiritual blessings, and we are raised to sit with him in the heavenlies. If that is so, our citizenship is in heaven along with him. We are no longer of this world, but are children of light; and from the time of our consecration we have entered on a pilgrimage, journeying to "that land of pure delight" as Watts has it; to "our inheritance in heaven" as the Scriptures have it; and to be made into spirit beings in the likeness of our dear Lord.

Now, newness of life may and does sometimes mean merely human perfection. But you see we cannot have the hope of **human** perfection for **our** resurrection, nor indeed for our **present** resurrection, if we are raised with Christ, for he had human perfection, but laid it down as a sacrifice, through the Father's favour. The consequence is, then, that we are not to look at our present resurrection in Christ merely as holiness of body or spirit: it is more; it is the entrance into spirit nature, of which holiness is an integral part. Holiness is a great thing, and we do not want to belittle it in any way, but if God has given us a privilege for holiness, it is as a means to an end, not the end itself.

When we become New Creatures in Christ Jesus, we are "not in the flesh, but in the spirit." That seems rather a bold thing to say. We have just come away from our tea,—we had our dinner a little while ago,—and in many ways we still feel very much in the flesh; but while the Apostle says this, we must take our position, by faith. Some day those words will be true in actuality. Some day, if we are faithful to our calling, we shall not be in the flesh, but in the spirit in the fullest sense of the word; but even now, this favour is accounted to us. "If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you . . . and if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Again, "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans VIII, 9-11). What does he mean by this? That from God's point of view, since we have been "raised with Christ," we are not accounted by the Heavenly Father as men in the flesh; but according to God we are in the spirit (I Peter IV, 6).

I think a good deal hangs upon this for our views of life, our views of our High-calling, our views of the possibilities that lie within us. We are helped greatly if we have the truth. Truth is always a blessing to us, and if we come to see that this is our Heavenly Father's provision for us now, that he counts us even here and now, while we are yet men in the flesh, as in the spirit, we shall be enabled all the better to lay hold of these spiritual blessings which are for us in Jesus Christ.

This is a great salvation; and there are few who comprehend it. I remember trying to tell a man of the salvation that I saw in Christ Jesus, and while I was telling him, I remembered the Scriptures which said that the natural man cannot understand the things of the Kingdom of God, and I thought I would do my very best to make this man understand; not that I doubted the text of Scripture (I Corinthians II, 14), but as an opportunity for proving the truth of the Word of God. He was an intelligent man, a Civil Engineer; but he said—"I cannot at all understand what you hope for. You don't seem to care for any of the things which appeal to me." He had just joined "Free Masonry." He thought it was going to be as a "new heaven on earth" for him; and he wanted me to go to the Lodge and become a Free Mason. I told him that I knew something better than that. He said—"What do you hope for? What do you care for?" Again I tried to tell him of the hope of our calling. He answered—"I cannot follow that at all." He could not understand it. The natural man cannot understand the things of the Kingdom of heaven, for they are spiritually discerned. But to those who have the Holy Spirit of God working in them, it becomes quite clear that the salvation that is before us is the hope that we may be with our dear Lord; not upon the earth, but in glory with him; not depending upon outside conditions, but having life within, and made in the express image of the Father's person, because made like the dear Lord.

It is well for us if these things do come within the scope of our understanding; we ought to be thanking God all the time that we have something given to us that will lift us above the very highest the world has to offer. You know that with the man of the world, health is a great deal; and a good frame is a great deal; and to the perfect man these are the ideal points. But the perfect man in the next Age, or Adam in the long past when he was perfect, never had such aims and hopes as we have. Adam could not have comprehended the things that we talk about so easily. A perfect man—supposing one could be born into the world now,—could not comprehend the things of the Spirit of God. God has given to us, in giving us the Holy Spirit, something as far beyond the highest dreams of the human mind, as heaven is beyond the earth. The perfect man delights in the things of the earth, delights in the things of a perfect man. He delights in human perfection of body, delights in human thought, delights in all the things that come to the imagination of the perfect human mind.

But if God would discover heaven to those who see some of

the glory of a perfect mind, and would give the understanding of the heavenly things of the Kingdom, he must give them of his Holy Spirit. And that he has done. He sent the Holy Spirit on the Church, and it has been working within the Church since Pentecost.

In order that we might have this understanding that would enable us to lay hold on this special salvation revealed in Christ, **God has actually,** as the Apostle puts it in his epistle to the Corinthians, **given us of his mind.** He says (I Corinthians II, 9-16)—"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, . . . because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual discerneth all things, yet he himself is discerned of no man." I might stand here a long time with my thoughts running through my mind, but unless they were expressed, you could not tell what they were. See the 16th verse—"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? **But we have the mind of Christ.**" The Lord has, as it were, actually given us a part of his mind, has given us a part of his Spirit, and sent it down, into the Church, that we may understand the things of the Spirit of God. God has opened to us the deep recesses of his own mind, and he bids us come and look, and see the things from his point of view. With this aid, dear Brethren, we can comprehend the things of heaven, and we can see there our inheritance and our rest. But a perfect man looking up into heaven, would never think of an inheritance beyond the stars. He would admire their beauty; he would admire the sun; he would admire all the things of heaven, and know that God was behind; but never, never in his fondest, wildest, imaginings, could he have thought he could get seated by the side of the Most High.

God has come to us through the giving of the Holy Spirit, and he has opened the avenues and lanes of his mind and bidden us walk there, and thus he tells us of the deep things which he has given us.

You see, dear Brethren, **how** we are called to walk in newness of life, and how our resurrection is with Christ, and that it must be a resurrection according to the spirit. God has given us a spiritual understanding, because we are called to a spirit nature; and it is in this way that we are being blessed with all spiritual blessings. With these spiritual blessings we are called with Christ, not to the hill-tops of the earth and its honours, joys, or perfection, but to sit with him in the heavenlies. How is this accomplished? How can we be changed from human to spiritual? We know that we cannot be changed from human to spirit beings except by death and resurrection; nor can we be changed even **reckonedly** into spirit beings except by death and resurrection. And so we are called to reckon ourselves dead, and to be buried with our Lord in baptism. But we are privileged not only to be buried but to be raised. So it is by reckoned death, and by reckoned resurrection, that we enter into the present resurrection in Christ.

I know the question "**HOW AM I TO DIE WITH CHRIST?**" often comes into the minds of those who begin to see something of the High-calling of God in Christ Jesus. And it is an important question. The world usually says "How am I to live?" But "How can I thus die?" is the cry of the truly consecrated. "How are we to die that we may get this spiritual resurrection?" Well, there are two ways; two views of one act. We crucify the old man, and we sacrifice our human privileges.

You may take our Lord's death in these two views. Our Lord was perfect when he died, yet it is quite true to say that there are two aspects. Our Lord died as one accursed. He took the sinners' place; he was made sin for us. You know that the "Diaglott" puts it—"He was made a sin offering." But our Lord was made more than a sin offering. He said—"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John III, 14, 15). The serpent was the figure of evil, and our Lord was made sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in him (II Corinthians V, 21). Our Lord died, taking the sinners' place; he died the just for the unjust (I Peter III, 18), and from that point of view he died a cursed death, "for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Galatians III, 13).

But from another point of view our Lord died as a willing, perfect sacrifice, as one who loved to do the Father's will, and who sacrificed the great possibilities which were within him, willingly, in order that he might gain that prize which the Heavenly Father had set before him (Psalm XL, 7, 8; Hebrews XII, 2; John IV, 34).

These two views apply also to **us.** We are permitted to die in this double sense. We crucify our old man, and we sacrifice the good reckoned to us on believing in God. Do not let us think, that we can come to God sacrificing the old fleshly desires that we had. They would be poor things indeed to offer to God in sacrifice. Do not let us think that we can come to Jesus and say "To thee all the pleasures of sin I resign." "I give you all these pleasures of sin as a sort of sacrifice; and now I will have what you have to give me." No, dear Brethren, the flesh, the old man, the evil passions that were reigning in us, because the law of sin and death was working in us, have to be crucified, not sacrificed. We that are Christ's, says the Apostle, have crucified the flesh with the affections and desires (Galatians V, 24). Remember that Paul, writing to the Galatians, tells us what they were (V, 19, 21)—"Now the works of the flesh are manifest . . . of which I tell you before, as I have told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." You see what are the affections and lusts of the flesh which must be crucified. And there must be no hesitancy in the crucifixion; we must drive in the nails that the dying may be sure.

But further, when we die with Christ, being immersed into him, we not only crucify the flesh, but we say that we will have done with all that is human. Thus when crucified with him we not only reckon dead, and continue to mortify, our members which are on the earth; we also say that with him we will die to all that is earthly, and so at the same time we render to God in sacrifice that justified life which our Father has counted to us. As crucified we are reckoned dead to our old mind, the affections and lusts of the flesh, and we also sacrifice the justified humanity. **We sacrifice the good, and crucify the evil.**

You ask then, What is left? and the answer is, We have a resurrection with Christ, as New Creatures. But it is manifest that this cannot be reckoned as on the human plane, and so we are continually forced to the thought that we are raised as New Creatures on the spirit basis. We are reckoned as having done with human hopes and desires, and are accounted as citizens of the heavens. Now we can see that we are not only buried with Christ but we are raised with him. When our Lord Jesus was crucified, he had forever sacrificed his humanity. But he was raised in glory, and in the power and glory of the Father will he continue his work of deliverance.

The crucifying of the affections and lusts of the flesh is not an easy thing. If we could do it in one act, or kill the "flesh" by one blow, it would be a comparatively easy matter: but you know our Lord says "I don't want it that way." It is character and determination for righteousness which He requires, and so we

are tested by the slow death of the affections. We should not be **proved overcomers** if we could at once kill the old man and have done with him. Our Heavenly Father is trying us by letting us keep driving the nails in, using a hammer day by day, making a slow knocking into the quivering flesh of the old man, or, one day a turn of a screw, another day another turn, always in this way mortifying the deeds of the flesh.

But we are also called to sacrifice the good, the human possibilities, and in some ways that is almost as hard as the other. When you have felt your heart's blood warming towards your fellow men, wanting to throw your energies into something for the amelioration of the race, and your Father says—"Wait, my child, not yet, not yet,"—why! to obey is a sacrifice. I know some of our dear Brethren have had to be almost dragged away from throwing their energies into the uplift of the race, because they had so much love for it. God says—"Not yet, not yet; by and by." Crucifixion is hard, and sacrifice is hard. It is never easy to die; and it is not easy to sacrifice the justified humanity that we have, nor easy to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. But our Heavenly Father gives grace and strength, and by these we have power to overcome, and to pray "Bind the sacrifice with cords to thine altar." As our Brother reminded us this afternoon, this is a "living sacrifice." I said a little while ago, that if we could do it all at once and have done with it, that would be comparatively easy. You have said to yourself sometimes, "Oh! if I could only get all my burdens on at once, and let them weigh me down and have done with them; if I could only finish off by some sudden burst of energy, then it would be an easy matter." But this is not the Father's method; rather he will perfect his work in us by this slow lingering process.

But a word of warning:—While we are glad to have done with the human, and while we are permitted to lay down our justified humanity as a sacrifice to our Heavenly Father, we must be very careful to treat that sacrifice properly. I know there have been some dear Brothers and Sisters who have thought that they could be careless with their body, because it was laid down as a sacrifice. That is not having proper respect to our Heavenly Father. If we have presented our body as a sacrifice to him, we should take care of it, that it may be as perfect a sacrifice as possible. We should not run it into danger, but remember that it is His, and that we have charge of it for his service. Do not let us be neglectful on that part, dear Brethren.

Looking again at our subject, we find the Apostle says "If any man be in Christ,"—that is, if any man has died with Christ and been raised with him—"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians V, 17). There we have it. Now you see, if any man be in Christ he is no longer of the old creation, but old things are passed away and all things have become new; and so the Apostle urges that we walk in the spirit, and to know nothing according to the flesh. You and I as new creatures, citizens of heaven, ought to be going about our daily life with our heads in heaven. You know what the world says of a man who is a visionary. It says he goes about with his head in the clouds. Usually such a man does not take particular care where he is going, and lets himself go blindly. You and I ought to go about with our heads high, not in the clouds, but through them, where we can see the bright sky beyond. That is our place, dear Brethren: in the heavenlies with Christ. There is nothing that happens to us in our daily life, or anything which can happen to us, but ought to be looked upon by us from the point of view of heaven: our citizenship, our polity, is in heaven, and our point of view must be from there.

Don't you see, that instead of thinking we are human beings, **we ought to reckon ourselves as spirit beings,** as though we were attaining to that which our Heavenly Father intends to give us. As the Apostle says "We are walking according to God in the spirit, but according to men in the flesh" (I Peter IV, 6). If we are taking hold of our privileges, we are looking at everything from the point of view of heaven, and all our actions are performed from that same point of view. It would make a great difference with us if we were to act up to this all the time. If we do not, it is because we have not realized our Father's power to save.

I hope and trust that we shall get a better grasp of things so freely given to us of God, and that we shall realize the power of our "High-calling." If we do, we shall find our salvation nearer than we thought! If we begin to look at all the things of daily life and experience as if seen from heaven, looking down on the earth we shall see that things which now trouble us have a very different aspect. There will be peace where there was unrest, and most of our troubles will be counted as things which do not matter. You know that if we could leave for a few months some of the things which now trouble us, we should then probably see them as very small things. And if, every day, we remember that we are New Creatures, we shall find that the unkind word, and the little trials put upon us are much more insignificant things than once we thought. If we live in the heavenlies, the unkind word of the earth would seem quite faint to us, and we should be unruffled by it. The shrill whistle of a railway train rushing across country, does not sound such a terrible thing when you are on a hill a mile away. The very things that are hurtful in the extreme, seem almost to make harmony when they are taken in that wide view of life which God would like to have us take.

Remember, if any man be in Christ, he is a New Creature. Did you mark that? he is a **New Creature**! Now, I rather fear that we go about thinking that the new creature is a something within us. That we think we have a part of a new creature, that we are still of human stock, and have a body that needs to be watched. Now let me remind you again, that Paul says "If any man be in Christ, he is a New Creature." He does not say "A new creature has begun in him," or "He may become a new creature," but, "he **IS** a **New Creature.**" Can that be true? Paul says "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live;" yet he says "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians II, 20). Now we ought to think of ourselves, not as of those who are still of flesh and blood, belonging to the earth, but as of those that are called to be New Creatures in the likeness of our dear Lord, with a present reckoned inheritance.

But one says, "Paul could not have had that thought at all, for he said 'But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.'" Well, if you look more closely at the text you will notice that when he used those words he was not speaking about the New Creature. See II Corinthians IV, 7. Paul is referring to the message God had given to him. The Corinthians did not appreciate Paul's message as much as they might have done, and Paul had to justify himself and talk with the people about himself; and he says "God has committed to us (the Apostles) a great ministry; but I admit that the ministry, this treasure, is in earthen vessels; and that we are very weak." He did not mean he was weak in Spirit, but he meant that that poor body which carried him about from place to place, and which suffered so much, was but a weak vessel, but a "tent," as in another place he names it.

We have this treasure of the **ministry** in earthen vessels. He is not speaking of the New Creature. And when a little later he said "But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (II Corinthians IV, 16), we are not to understand him to mean that the inward man is the New Creature, and the outward man the old nature. Both inner man and outer man are holy in God's sight, necessary in our present pilgrim condition. With Paul, we speak of that which is inward as being things comprehended by the mind, by the spirit; and that inward

man is growing day by day; and the necessary outward man is a "tent" dwelling, outside, and is perishing, though it is reckoned holy, a temple of the Holy Spirit.

But can it be that this body of flesh is reckoned holy? Why, dear Brethren, it is. Now, if you have not been in the way of thinking that your flesh, your whole mind, body, spirit and soul is by God accounted holy, you have not been living up to your privileges. Take the Apostle's argument in Romans, beginning at the sixth chapter, and see there how he puts this matter. After he has shown you how there is the justification through belief in Christ, and also access into this grace wherein we stand through this same justification, he goes on to say that this is not all; we are not merely to hope for justification, but we are privileged to **die** for Christ. Then he speaks of dying with Christ and of being raised with him, and says "Now brethren, yield your members unto God. These very members wherein did work the law of sin and death, yield these unto God." He goes on to say that whereas these which were instruments of unrighteousness, these very members of the body are to be yielded as instruments of righteousness unto God (verse 13).

The sixth chapter tells us how we should do this; but in the seventh chapter he shows that the old law of Israel never allowed man to do it. There was a power working within every man, Israel included, which dragged him down, no matter how he might want to overcome the sin and live above it. All seem to pull him down, and he says "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But now, in Christ, there is deliverance, and he cries "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (verses 24, 25). Then he goes on to say that the law of sin and death does not work in us, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" for a new law has come into operation. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans VIII, 1, 2). Have you realized it? Do you think of yourself, dear Brethren, as of those who are of sin and death? Oh! if we have that thought, let us put it away at once. Since we have the Spirit of Christ, a new law works in us, the law of life; and, says Paul, **"we are not in the flesh if we walk after the spirit."**

He goes on to finish the argument of the sixth chapter: showing that our Heavenly Father has actually made a provision whereby our body has been reckoned holy, and our members acceptable as instruments of righteousness. The resurrection thought is in his mind all the time; and to show that our body is reckoned holy in the sight of God, he says "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans VIII, 11). That does not mean that God will quicken this body to give us a perfectly healthy body. Nor does it mean, He will quicken this body and carry it into immortality; but it does mean that this death-doomed, mortal body, which we have reckoned crucified with its affections and lusts, and sacrificed in its justified condition, is reckoned quickened, reckoned as part of a present resurrection, for the service of God. Dear Brethren, our happy position before our Father is, that our hands may be quick to do his bidding, and yield him service; that our feet, our mouth, lips, eyes, ears, every one of our senses, which were defiled, which dragged us down, even these very things can be as the temple of the Holy Spirit. So he says "Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit" (I Corinthians VI, 19).

So, dear Brethren, we are coming back again to this same thing—that we are reckoned before God as spiritual, and not as members of the accursed race. Thanks to his grace, we are freed from the condemnation in Adam, have been counted worthy to sacrifice with Jesus; and God has given us a present resurrection in the likeness of Christ. Our Lord said that the new wine of his teaching put into the old bottles of the Pharisaic teaching would have burst them; so it is true that if God had given us the Spirit when we were not accounted as spirits, it would have been more than we could have contained.

But, we must be very, very careful not to think of ourselves as having the perfectly holy body which we spoke of at the beginning; our body is only **reckoned** holy. But do not let us reckon it **not** holy when God reckons it holy. Let us not any more think that our body is not fitted for the mind or Spirit of God. "Your body is the temple of the living God" does not mean only your mind, nor does it mean the body corporate of the Church, it is true in the individual sense. As New Creatures, we have the Spirit of God, our mind is transformed, and our body, our flesh, is holy in the sight of the Lord. Let us remember that we can render God **acceptable**, if not absolutely perfect service. We may render him praise, our mind may praise him, and our body may be yielded as instruments of righteousness because we no longer belong to the earth, nor are subject to the enemy; we are free, we are under a new law, our citizenship, our polity, being in heaven. Rightly to understand our privilege will mean much gain.

Perhaps the greatest advantage that attaches to this is, that if we realize what we are in the sight of God, we are in a very much more favourable position for victory,—overcoming the weakness within ourselves, overcoming the world, and overcoming the evil one,—than if we took a lower position than our Heavenly Father intended for us. You know if we think of ourselves as of those that are members of the fallen race, and that God has given us something of his Spirit; that we have to be developed, and that the body is so big and strong, the affections of the flesh so deeply rooted that we can hardly develop the Spirit; why, we put ourselves in a very unfavourable position. But if we realize the privilege that we have in the resurrection that God has given to us now; counting ourselves lifted above the weaknesses of the world, counting ourselves, our body, reckoned pure in the sight of God, accounted by him ever since our consecration as New Creatures, we are in a very much more favourable position for overcoming. If you have a difficult task to perform, and you keep thinking of the difficulties, the result is their apparent increase. If you have something to do to-day that you think is rather difficult, and say, "I will leave it until to-morrow," you find it is more difficult then. If you leave it two days, it is worse still, and all the time the burden is on your mind. If you think you have something you cannot overcome, why, you are almost sure not to overcome. If you think of yourselves as overcomers, you can through grace overcome all. There is nothing on earth that can hinder our progress, and there is nothing in heaven that will. I want you to see that in Christ we are raised, are counted New Creatures, and that we are on the way to the full and final salvation our Heavenly Father has provided for us through our dear Lord.

When we come into newness of life, we enter as it were into a strange land, and watchfulness is specially needed. To us everything is new, even as the Apostle says—"old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"; but, thanks be to God, "all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ" (II Corinthians V, 17, 18). Nothing of evil comes to us from our Heavenly Father, though evil is permitted to come upon us; but whether evil is allowed, or difficulties are placed in our way, our obligation is to take all things as of God. I do not know that it is right to say of everything—"My Father planned it all." It is good to think our Father can make even our mistakes work for our good. Yes, even the mistakes work for our good; for if we have sense, we will try hard not to make the same mistake again; and our Heavenly Father helps us by these failures, as we follow on to know him better and learn his will.

When our Lord Jesus had prefigured his death and resurrec-

tion in the waters of Jordan, the very first thing that happened to him was, that he was led away to be tempted; and, dear Brethren, when we have gone down into consecration, and have come up into reckoned newness of life, then it is that we are led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. I am not speaking of the act of baptism specially, for from the time of our consecration we are particularly the object of Satan's malice. The devil does not tempt the world: he has no need to do so; for the Apostle says that the whole world lieth in wickedness (I John V, 19). Satan turns it about at his will, his only restraint being that which the Father puts upon him, that he may not transgress God's will nor hinder His purposes. But to us, Satan comes with that same maliciousness he brought to our Lord, and in the same way we are particularly the objects of his attention.

Why did he come to our Lord? You know that from the time when Adam fell in the garden, there had never been one of whom Satan had any fear: no one was able to get back into the original inheritance of mankind, for all of Adam's sons were under the law of sin and death; and Satan had watched them falling, deeper and deeper into sin. But he saw in Jesus, one who stood, and in him he saw one who would shake his kingdom to the very foundation, and probably wrest it from him. He saw in him one who had ability to get back into the original inheritance of man. Unlike all others, there was no sin in him; and Satan tried his very utmost to destroy the faith, the hope, and the life of our dear Lord and Master. You know, dear Brethren, everything depended on him. What if Jesus had fallen? The result is terrible to contemplate, for Jesus was God's best. If God had sent an angel into the world to test the power and to try to stem the tide of evil, and the angel had failed, there would still have been hope for the world. But God did not send any of these. He charged his best with the mission. He sent his greatest one, and he was found in fashion as a man, in order that he might meet the tempter; and Satan, when he had tried his strength against our dear Lord and had failed, knew that his dominion over man was threatened. Then when he saw Jesus raised to power and glory he knew that sooner or later his reign over man must come to an end.

Since then, he has seen some, once ruled by him, freed from his power and having the Spirit of Jesus, actually growing strong in righteousness. To these, his temptations have come, against these his shafts have been levelled; for these also seem likely to gain control of man's original estate, and to cast him out. These have been tempted as their Lord was tempted, for Satan desires to retain the dominion he has usurped.

Dear Brethren, we have been members of the fallen race, but despite our weakness, by the power of God we also can withstand the temptations. But only as we live in the "heavenlies" and because, thus, "we are not ignorant of his devices." If we do not walk as New Creatures, raised with Christ, we shall be liable to fall before the tempter. But, if we remember that our citizenship is in heaven, we shall always realize our power to withstand Satan all the time, making no failures.

There are three avenues in which Satan comes. He said to the woman that (1) the fruit of the tree was good to look upon; (2) it was good to eat; and (3) it was a tree to be desired to make one wise. Our Lord was tempted in this three-fold way. The Apostle speaks of the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life (I John II, 16); the church puts these three —the world, the flesh, and the devil.

If we keep our thoughts with God, living in the heavenlies with our Lord Jesus, these three avenues are well guarded, and Satan will lose the prize that he has held. Our "old man," the affections and lusts of the flesh, though it is hanging upon the cross, is not dead, and our work is to keep it there, hanging until it dies.

There is something that is closely related to the fleshly mind, and through which we are tested. If we are walking according to the Spirit of God, we will not in any way walk after the flesh. Here I do not mean walking after the affections and lusts in the grosser sense, but I mean walking after the fleshly view o Christ. I think we are in danger of doing that very often. We do not realize or always remember that we are New Creatures. We do not look on things from heaven's point of view. We look at things from underneath the clouds instead of from above them. I believe it has been and still is the great trouble with the churches. They have been looking at Jesus according to the flesh, not according to the Spirit, and that is why they have been and are still trying to heal the world of its woes. Satan tempted the Lord along this line. He said—"Look on all these kingdoms, and think of their needs; if you will worship me I will make you master of the earth in a short time, and with your great ability, your perfect manhood, the possibilities are untold. See what you can do for the earth! Come, let us make the earth better; let us have the "Times of Restitution" **now.**" The temptation was calculated to cause Jesus to see things from a human point of view, and it must have been very keen to the Lord. Satan has tempted the churches along this line, and they have fallen; and we are tempted to make the same mistake. But no longer does fleshly wisdom rule: we see light in God's light, and, with the wisdom of the Spirit, "we wait for his Son from heaven," when the world shall be healed of all its troubles. This **waiting is part of our sacrifice,** so let us be very careful that Satan does not bring us to the fleshly mind.

If we have been astray, what is the cure for us? To have a single eye to the glory of God, seeking first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, then we shall not go far wrong. By living up to the vow of consecration; seeking no desire of our own; seeking no present advantage for ourselves or our fellows; seeking my own highest good; seeking the highest good of my brother. In doing this we shall not get wrong, and we shall be found pleasing to God.

And now, a word about **THE POWER OF THE PRESENT RESURRECTION.** The Apostle said—"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things . . . that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Philippians III, 8-11). What is the power of his resurrection? When God brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, and seated him at his own right hand in heavenly places, it was the mightiest act God had done. From the way the Bible puts the matter, it seems a small thing for God to say—"Let light be"—and light was. The Psalmist says, "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm XXXIII, 9). But the Apostle, when speaking of the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, says God put forth his **mighty** power when he raised Jesus from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; made him Lord of all, brought him up from the grave and put him there. When, therefore, Paul says—"I count all things but loss that I might know the power of **that** resurrection," he is speaking of this **mighty power** of God. Well, dear Brethren, that power will one day work for us, after we have laid down our lives in sacrifice, and according to God's promise, will set us with him high above might and majesty and dominion. But it will not be applied to us unless it is working in us now in the present resurrection. The mighty power of God works in us now, not to make us perfect men and women, but to change us from glory to glory; it enables us to see things from God's point of view, and so to live according to the glory in the heavens; and, as the Apostle says—it is working in us "unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness (Colossians I, 11).

Dear Brethren, it is our great privilege to have this power of God working in us. Can we work in harmony with the will of God? Can we live a higher life? Can we live a life of victory? You remember it was said of the child Jesus before he was born, "thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew I, 21), Of course we can live a life of victory. The Master in the very last words that he uttered in the way of discourse, after he had eaten the last supper with his disciples, when they were about to leave that upper room and go away through the dark, deep valley of the Kedron—symbolizing the second death—and up to the garden of Gethsemane said—"I have overcome the world" (John XVI, 33). And, dear Brethren, that same power that worked in him, God's mighty power which raised Christ from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenlies, is working in us. Can we overcome? Yes, for God has given us the power of the law of the Spirit of life, the the Holy Spirit of power. He has given us of his own Spirit; he takes us out of the earth and shows us the realms of the heaven, tells us of his plan, makes us know his desires, lets us see the deep things of God to enable us to understand, that we may be fully graduated and capable co-heirs with his Son.

And now he bids us walk in the footsteps of our Leader, who made a straight path to glory. Before our Lord Jesus came, not a man, Jew or Gentile, was able to walk in the paths of righteousness. But Jesus came, bringing life and immortality to light (II Timothy I, 10), and when he had risen on high and received the Holy Spirit, he, as the Apostle says—"shed forth this which ye now see" (Acts II, 33); and now we, by the power of the Holy Spirit, can walk straight. Our Lord Jesus said, when speaking of the will of the Father,—"I do always the things that please him" (John VIII, 29). Can we do that? Hear what the Apostle says—"The God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd," (he has the same thought of power in mind, but does not express it). He "who brought again from the dead . . . work in you that which is well pleasing in his sight" (Hebrews XIII, 20, 21), and it is our **privilege** to overcome: and

As surely as he overcame,
And conquered death and sin,
So surely those who trust his name,
May all his triumph win.

Soon our Heavenly Father will have standing on Mount Zion a company of people, each of whom has been tempted of the devil and has overcome; a company who have had the weaknesses of flesh and blood; who have had the snares of the world around them; have been thrown into the world's struggles, but who have crucified the flesh, and, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, have stopped their ears to its many temptations. They have gone in the footprints of the Master. They stand on Mount Zion. "Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?" said the Psalmist, "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart" (Psalm XXIV, 3, 4). If now, we have clean hands and a pure heart we will not only be of those who have their sin forgiven, their iniquities covered, their transgressions pardoned, but we may be accounted among those who have no guile in their hearts, and are full of the sweetness and the beauty of holiness. Well, dear Brethren, I want my heart to be without guile, and I want for you that your hearts shall be without guile. If we would be on Zion hill, we must not only be called to this position, we must not only be chosen, but we must be faithful; and **I do not think we can be faithful to the end, unless we realize that we have NOW the power of the resurrection working in us.**

Let us not think that there is anything in the flesh, anything in the world, be it evil or apparently good, or any power that can for one moment stop us on our onward path. There is not! God has given us the power of victory, and victory may always be ours. If we think of ourselves as overcomers and as of those who have the Holy Spirit, depend upon it, we shall overcome. If we think of ourselves as of those ready to halt, or faint-minded, as of those who can trust in God one day but the next day are not so sure about it, we will not overcome. We are never to faint, but always to believe that we can overcome; then we shall have that faith which makes us overcomers. "This is the victory that overcometh . . . even your faith" (I John V, 4).

Dear Brethren, may the Lord help us to walk through the days that are before us as of those who have the banner of victory. A trying time is before us, without a doubt. As the days shorten, and the time of our sojourn shortens, there are sure to be many subtle trials and difficulties come upon us. As in the earlier parts of the journey, so now, we are sure to meet things which will be a test, newer forms of temptation, all designed to take our attention away from the great thing that we have set before us. We cannot avoid the enemy. Our Heavenly Father has not chained him yet; and he will come, and come right to the very end, as he came to our dear Lord. But we can successfully resist him. Let us be able to say—"The devil cometh, but he hath nothing in me" (John XIV, 30). Let us be pure minded, seeking only the glory of God. If our enemy can turn us only a little from the straight path, what a difference it may make with us! We might not get back in time to make our calling and election sure.

Now, I am not one, dear Brethren, of those who think that the majority of those who have present truth are going to be failures. I believe that those who, we know, live in the truth, live in the faith, will realize the power of God. I know that we are not all "angels," but I believe, that He who has begun a good work in us will also complete it. Moses saw the goodness and power of God and his tender care over his people. Almost at the end of his journey, looking over the tents of Israel, and knowing that he himself must leave those to whom he had for so many years been as a father, and thinking of the trials and the difficulties through which the people had passed; thinking also of their weakness and many failings, he could say—"Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord" (Deuteronomy XXXIII, 29). Moses knew that if God would take out the children of Israel from Egypt and put them in the promised land, he must do it by **His** own power. And, dear Brethren, we know that if God would take out of this evil world, a people who were born in sin, shapen in iniquity, and who have been tossed about by the winds of evil; a people with imperfect ability to comprehend that which is good, no ability to grasp it; if God would take such a people from this world and make them like his dear Son it must be by **His** own power. And this might is exercised in us "working in you mightily unto all longsuffering and patience."

Let us count ourselves as of that people saved by the Lord. His grace has been given to us, and we also are of those of whom it shall be said "Happy is that people saved by the Lord."

Finally, dear Brethren, let us allow the Lord to finish the good work He has begun. Through faith we have been justified, and have access into this grace wherein we stand. By faith we die **with** Christ, crucifying the old man, and sacrificing the justified man; and by faith we are raised with Him, in His likeness. Henceforth we are New Creatures, walking not as men in the flesh, but as in the spirit, fitting ourselves for that permanent dwelling awaiting us in heaven. This is our high calling: let us heed the Apostle, and make our calling and election sure. We still need to mortify our members which are upon the earth; we must keep our old man upon the cross. But, in Christ victory is ours, for greater is He that is for us than all that can be against us. It is given to us to overcome, and "having done all, to stand."

Amen.

Socialism and the Bible.

By Brother John Edgar.

OUR text for to-night is Haggai II, 7—"And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come."

This is the opening of a new year, a time generally recognized as very appropriate for looking back as individuals and also as communities on the failures and successes of the past, in order that we may profit by the lessons of experience. Only a few years ago, Socialism was advocated by none but a few theorists. It was merely an academic question. Practical men smiled at it. To-day we have but to scan the newspapers to find that Socialism is a living and actively-growing international force.

What is the reason of this? Let us look back into the past, and let us look at the present condition of affairs and ask ourselves the question: Are there any grounds of complaint against the present order of affairs? We shall find that the answer is undoubtedly in the affirmative. There are many different grounds of discontent, but they can be gathered together into three main lines of argument.

The first main line of argument is the argument from justice. The second, the argument from economy. The third, the argument from necessity. First, as regards the

ARGUMENT FROM JUSTICE,

Socialism says: It is not fair that some men should get the best of everything, simply because they happen to be born into a particular sphere of life, or because they happen to have more influence than others. This ought not to be. Every man should start life alike in opportunity; there should be no favouritism at all. Very often those who are successful in this life, have not any greater ability, and sometimes are possessed of less ability than those less fortunate in the struggle for life. As an extreme example of this, there are individuals who receive honour and homage simply because they happen to be the eldest sons of kings or peers. Socialism says: If a man is to be rewarded in any way, it ought to be because of his own merits and not simply from accident of birth, or because he happens to have more backstair influence than his neighbours. On the other hand, if a man is to be poor and of low station in life, it ought to be because of his own fault, and not because his parents have been poor or careless, or because he cannot find employment though anxious for it. There is no getting away from that argument, dear friends. That is the argument from justice; and a very reasonable one.

The second argument is the

ARGUMENT FROM ECONOMY.

What a wastage there is in the present competitive system. There is the enormous expense of advertising and touting for orders. There is the deterioration of goods owing to overproduction, and the manufacture of shoddy material for the purpose of cutting down prices. Finally, there is the expense of money, time, and labour, involved in the present overlapping not only in the manufacture of articles, but also in their delivery. Compare, for instance, the delivery of letters with the delivery of shop goods. The present system ought to be done away with, the Socialists say. If in its place there were only a joint and orderly system of production and delivery, what an immense saving there would be! That is the argument from economy.

Thirdly, there is the

ARGUMENT FROM NECESSITY.

We see as we look round about us to-day, that the social conditions are not right. There are thousands upon thousands of people who are badly clad, badly fed, badly housed. When we look at the labour conditions, we see thousands out of employment, and we see tens of thousands more who are overworked, and underpaid. Then again, when we look into the physical and mental conditions of the people, we see there is much to be desired. For instance, the asylums and hospitals are growing in size and in number year by year; and yet they are always filled to overflowing. Not only is this the case, but outside of the asylums and hospitals we find vast numbers of people completely or partially disabled, mentally, morally, and physically. No doubt, much of their disability is beyond the power of the physician, or social reformer to remove, but some of it, at least, could be overcome by proper laws and regulations, more especially if the wealth of the country were in the hands of the nation. Again, when we look into the moral conditions of the people, we find that the present system is accountable for much. Thousands of families are compelled to live in houses of one apartment, and the poor are crowded into districts badly ventilated, badly lit, and badly drained. In all the large cities, amid the moral and physical filth of the slums, children and young men and women grow up exposed to many evil influences, and, sad to relate, these evil influences are not confined to the slums, though most noticeable there. These things ought not to be, and with proper laws and regulations much of this evil could be eradicated.

These are the arguments, dear friends, and the last argument is a very important one. The more we study the whole question, the more we see the need for drastic reform. **Deliverance from the present order of things is a necessity** recognized by all humane and right-thinking people.

Having thus shortly considered the three main lines of argument in favour of Socialism, let us now ask ourselves the question: Is Socialism practicable? I am choosing Socialism, because I regard it as the best of all the schemes which have been devised. The Socialists say that the present system ought to be changed, and that if this were done, and the principles of Socialism were adopted, we should see peace and contentment all around, and that thus the desire of all nations would come.

IS SOCIALISM PRACTICABLE? There are two questions involved here. (I) Are there any difficulties in the way of Socialism becoming established? (II) Should it come to be established, will it work? Will the desired ends be gained?

(I) ARE THERE ANY DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF SOCIALISM BEING ESTABLISHED? (1) The first difficulty in the way is **the indifference of the people,** mostly due to the natural mental lethargy which opposes all change. But this, dear friends, is being rapidly overcome. The people were first roused to a sense of their rights as men, by the Reformation, and later by the French Revolution, both of which were largely due to the invention of the art of printing, and consequent increase of knowledge. Within late years education has become general in all civilized countries. Every town and every city, and even every village and every hamlet are being flooded with literature which has become so cheap that it is within the means of the poorest,—newspapers, pamphlets, magazines, and books of all descriptions. These are enlightening the people, and awakening them up to a sense of their rights.

Owing to this and to the ready means of intercommunication, the people of different villages, town and counties, and even also of different countries are becoming acquainted with each other in a way not possible before; and they are beginning to see that there is a great deal in common between the different nations.

All the various prejudices which divided people from people are being broken down, and now the cry is going forth: "The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man." The people see in "Patriotism" merely a device of the rulers of the countries to keep the power in their own hands. As a result, the indifference to Socialism is being rapidly overcome. Very soon it will be completely broken down, and then, as Daniel puts it when referring to this as "the time of the end," the time when "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased," there will be "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation" (Daniel XII, 1-4).

(2) The next difficulty in the way, a very important one, is **the opposition of vested interests.** By vested interests, I mean everything that certain people believe to be their rights, whether it be rank, or property, or land, or money. The man who happens to be a king or a duke, considers it his rank as a right. The man who has inherited or bought property or land, claims that it is his by right, and the same thing is true with regard to money. The Socialists will meet with more and more opposition from those who possess these vested interests, for very few of them would give up what they consider their rights simply that others may benefit. All men do not yet love their neighbours as themselves. Before that could come about, there would need to be a moral revolution. Men's hearts would require to be changed.

It is the poor who feel the hardships most, and it is they, as they are becoming enlightened, who are swelling the ranks of the Socialists, because they see in Socialism their only hope of relief. The poor say to the rich: "It is all very well for you to speak about your rights. Look at us? Look how we are suffering? It is not fair. You have no right to the land, or to so much money. You cannot use one tithe of your possessions. Look at such men as Rockefeller, for instance. What an enormous income he has! He cannot possibly use more than the least fraction of it. It is not fair for these multi-millionaires to have so much money, while we are denied even the necessities of life."

Thus the poor are suffering from the hardships of the present time, and are swelling the ranks of the Socialists. They are saying it will not do to suffer these things any longer. But the men with vested interests, the aristocrats, landowners, property-owners, and capitalists, and also the Church, do not want any change in the existing social and political arrangements. They would like to see the people more contented and more servile, and to this end they are willing to grant them certain measures of reform, but they do not want any such radical change as Socialism demands. The day is past, however, for the people to be content with things as they are. They are too much enlightened for that. The indifference is being rapidly broken down, and Socialism is getting stronger and stronger.

Fifty years ago, the division of political parties in this country was into "Tories" and "Whigs." After a time these became "Conservatives" and "Liberals." Latterly, this also has been changed, and we hear about "Conservatives" and "Liberal-unionists" in the one camp, and "Liberals" and "Radicals" in the other. Thus we see that the influence of the people has been growing stronger, forcing even the Conservative party to institute reforms. A few years ago a great extension of the "franchise" was granted in this country, and this has put more power into the hands of the people. In Germany and other countries, the franchise is not so general as here, and as a result, there is more discontent in those countries.

Within late years a new party, the Socialist or Social-democrat party, has come into being in this and all the other civilized countries; and we should expect that very soon the parties in the state will be known as Socialists and Non-Socialists, although each of these may probably be divided into sub-parties. Every thinking man sees this coming. The Non-Socialist party,—the aristocrats, the capitalists and the Church, already oppose the Socialists as much as they dare in the face of public opinion; and I fully expect that when the first extreme measure of Socialism occurs, they will rise up and oppose Socialism more openly than in the past. They will endeavour to extinguish it, encouraging themselves the meantime with such arguments as may be dictated by fear and self-interest. They will have the support of those whose interests are bound up with theirs. They will have the support also of such peace-loving people as may fear to trust themselves to the will of the people. But the Socialists will demand and get many reforms, and this will make them eager for more. Impatient at the opposition which they will receive, and at the slowness of reform, the people will become more imperative in their demands. We cannot expect that those now in authority will meekly submit. Trouble will ensue, and after several abortive attempts to obtain their desires, the Socialists, if they find that they cannot get what they want by peaceful means, will have recourse to force. A revolution will break out. The nations are now so bound together that the war between the masses and the classes will become world-wide. The various kingdoms will associate with each other against their common enemy, the people. In the end, all the present kingdoms and institutions will be overthrown. In the struggle, the people, having tasted liberty, will break away from the restraint of their leaders. Anarchy will ensue, and there will be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation.

The people have been likened to a great giant who allowed himself in the past, while slumbering in ignorance and superstition, to be put into bondage. For some time back he has been slowly wakening up, and has already broken some of his fetters. Soon he will be fully awake, and, bursting all his bonds in his anger, he will rise in his strength and crush the powers that be.

(II) Let us suppose that Socialism will become established by peaceful means or by force. Will it work? Will the ends desired be gained? With human nature as it is, will the desire of all nations be realized through some form of Socialism? In order to consider this matter fully and clearly, let us see what Socialism is in its main features; and what it is not. I shall read this leaflet which was handed to me to-day. It is published by Mr. Robert Blatchford, Editor of *The Clarion*, a Socialist paper, and sets forth first what Socialism is, and then what Socialism is not:—

WHAT SOCIALISM IS.

"Great Britain is ruled by the wealthy in the interests of the wealthy. We propose that it should be ruled by the people in the interests of the people; for class rule brings conflict of interest, which brings hatred, while community of interests breeds fellowship, and fellowship is life.

"All the means of existence in Great Britain are owned by individuals. We submit that things which are needful to make a nation and maintain a nation should be owned by the nation.

"The nation owns the navy, the Government factories, the public buildings, the arsenals, the forts, and the barracks. We suggest that the nation should own ALL the ships, ALL the railways, ALL the factories, ALL the buildings, ALL the land, ALL the requisites of national life and defence.

"The nation manages the Post Office, the Telegraphs, and, through the local Councils, it manages many of its gasworks, waterworks, and tramways. We contend that the nation should manage ALL its business and ALL its work.

"The nation directs the people's morals through a State Church, which once a week teaches the wickedness of grinding the faces of widows and orphans. We claim that the nation should establish social conditions which will make oppression and injustice impossible all the week round."

That is what Socialism is. Then it goes on to say what it is not:—

WHAT SOCIALISM IS NOT.

"Those who do not wish you to be Socialists have given you very false notions about Socialism, in the hope of setting you against it.

"The men who have tried to smash your unions, who have written against you, and spoken against you, and acted against you in all the great strikes and lock-outs, are the same men who speak and write against Socialism.

"They say that Socialists want to get up a revolution, to turn the country upside down by force, to seize all property, and to divide it equally amongst the whole people.

"But to-day, there are very few Socialists who believe in brute force, or who think a revolution possible or desirable.

"I have always been dead against the idea of revolution, for many reasons. I do not think a revolution is possible in Britain. Firstly, because the people have too much sense; secondly, because the people are by nature patient and kindly; thirdly, because the people are too free to make force needful.

"Revolution by force of arms is not desirable or feasible; but there is another kind of revolution from which we hope great things. This is a revolution of thought. Let us once get the people, or the big majority of the people, to understand Socialism, to believe in Socialism, and to work for Socialism, and the real revolution is accomplished.

"As to seizing the wealth of the country and sharing it out amongst the people. First, we do not propose to seize anything. We do propose to get some things,—the land, for instance,—and to make them the property of the whole nation; but we mean that to be done by Act of Parliament, and by purchase. Second, we have no idea of 'sharing out' the land, nor the railways, nor the money, nor any other kind of wealth or property, equally amongst the people. To share these things out—if they could be shared, which they could not be—would be to make them private property, whereas we want them to be public property, the property of the British nation.

"'Make all men equal in possessions,' cry the Non-Socialists, 'and in a very short time there would be rich and poor, as before.'

"It is quite true that, did we divide all wealth equally to-morrow, there would in a short time be many penniless, and a few in a way of getting rich; but it is only true if we suppose that after the sharing we allowed private ownership of land and the old system of trade and competition to go on as before. Change those things: do away with the bad system which leads to poverty and to wealth, and we should have no more rich and poor."

Now, dear friends, supposing that Socialism was established as these men wish, what would be the outcome of it? Would it work? Will the three main lines of argument be met successfully? You remember the three arguments in favour of Socialism:—Justice, Economy, Necessity. (I) What about

THE ARGUMENT FROM JUSTICE?

Socialists say "Let all men start alike in opportunity. It is not right that some should get the good things of this life, and others be left in poverty or worse, and that simply because of the accident of birth. Will it be possible with human nature as it is, for all men to start alike in opportunity? The answer is undoubtedly in the negative. For, granted that all men started alike as regards wealth, or that all the wealth belonged to the state, there are many other differences which it is impossible for man to overcome by his own power. All men are not alike in health or physical capacity, nor in mental and moral qualities. Owing to differences in health, and in physical capacity, some men are able to do more work than others. Men could not be equal in that respect. Again, owing to the differences in mental ability, some men are able to do superior work, work of a kind or degree altogether beyond the capacity of others.

But not only are there degrees of mental and physical ability and disability, there are also differences in morals, and this is the chief difficulty with which Socialism would have to contend. Some men are good, honest and trusting. That is the kind of man that does not get on in this world; he trusts too much. There are others who take advantage of these and try to get the best of everything, by honest means if they can, by dishonest means if they cannot. Thus it would be impossible to get all men to start exactly alike in all respects.

But supposing that all men were started alike in the matter of wealth and position in life and in every other possible respect, what would be the result? Would it be possible to get peace and contentment in that way? No, dear friends. To ensure peace and contentment, which is the desire of all nations, this would necessitate that those in authority, the officials, should be endowed with such keen preceptions and such accuracy of judgment that they would be able to weigh everything and judge everything so exactly, that they could discern whether any advantage one might gain over another was duly earned, and whether any loss that another might suffer was truly deserved. More than that, those in authority would require to be possessed of such power, that they could exercise their authority to the best advantage for the people, and, finally, they would require to be so wise and loving and just in all their words and actions that the people would eventually be perfectly satisfied and bow to their decisions.

That would be a consummation to be desired, would it not? If that were brought about, then indeed the desire of all nations would be realized. But with human nature as it is, such a consummation is hopeless. With the exception of Christ, no man born into this world has ever had such keen perceptions and such accuracy of judgment; and even if men of more than ordinary perception and judgment were put in power, the people, having tasted the sweets of liberty and individual judgment, would not allow them to exercise their authority against their will. Consequently, it would be necessary for the people also to be endowed with accuracy of judgment, unless, indeed, those in authority were in a position successfully to defy the will of the people on all occasions. This, however, would be an Autocratic, not a Socialistic government.

With human nature as it is, there would inevitably be acts of injustice on the part of the officials, some of them intentional, due to moral obliquity, some of them unintentional, due to lack of judgment or to thoughtlessness or carelessness. As a result, there would soon be a great deal of grumbling and discontent, and no board of officials, however well intentioned they might be, would be able to satisfy everybody, or even the majority. The people would eventually break away from restraint, and anarchy would sooner or later ensue.

(II) Let us now consider

THE ARGUMENT FROM ECONOMY.

There are five main difficulties in the way of Socialism proving successful. (a) There would be **the difficulty of organization.** Efficiency would require one central government, with local governments for local affairs. To get these local governments to work in harmony with the central government and with each other, and to satisfy the people, would be extremely difficult, and a great deal of power would necessarily be placed in the hands of a few. What would be the result of this? Clever schemers would get posts in the central and local governments, for the sake of the power they could wield. Once

they got the power, the people would suffer, and trouble would undoubtedly ensue.

(b) Then there would be **the difficulty of supply.** There would require to be officials who would deal out the various necessities of life. Eager to get through with their work, they would chafe at the need of attending to individual peculiarities, and would shirk this duty more or less. Hence trouble would ensue from this cause also. How different it would be, however, if each of the officials in charge had perfect minds and perfect hearts!

(c) Then there would be **the difficulty of employment.** The people would require to be placed in certain employments. Very soon many would desire a change. They would say: "I am rather tired of this kind of work. I should like something different." Or: "I am tired of being in this place. I should like to go somewhere else." What endless trouble this would cause! It would be impossible to allow men to choose or change their employment as they liked, for this would mean that while there might be a superabundance of labour in certain employments and in certain districts, in others there would be a lack of men. Hence, the people would be forced more or less to stay where they were and discontent would be sure to result.

(d) Next there would be **the question of wages.** Some propose that the people should not receive money in wages. In that case they would require to get food and clothing, which would really be a form of wages. Either all would receive alike, or else, if graded, the wages would require to be more or less at the discretion of the officials in charge of this department. Supposing everybody from the highest to the lowest got exactly the same, what would be the result? The result, dear friends, would be that those who had ability would not have any incentive to put forth their best efforts. That is what we find in a measure at the present time in the "Trades Unions." There are noble exceptions, but I am speaking about the generality of men. There would be a good deal of discontent about this matter.

Supposing, on the other hand, that the wages were graded. Would not that put a great deal of power in the hands of the officials? What an amount of wire-pulling there would be to obtain the best posts. It would be impossible to prevent all the evils of the present competitive system. Those in authority would require to be perfect in mind and heart; but even then do you think the people would be satisfied? You find generally that the people who cause most trouble are those who are most incapable. There was a strike of boilermakers in Glasgow the other day; and I happened to be visiting the wife of one of these boilermakers. She told me she wished the strike would come to an end, and said that the men who were at the bottom of the strike were the loafers, the men who do not work anyhow. During the time the strike is on, these men get their strike money, but when the strike is finished, the strike money stops. It is the lazy and the incapable class who are the most discontented.

(e) Lastly, there would be **the difficulty of the absence of certain motives for work.** The majority of men are lazy, careless and self-indulgent, unless they have an adequate motive for work, such as fear of poverty and suffering for themselves and their dependents, or the hope of providing comfort and ease, health and education for themselves and their dependents. Socialism proposes to take care of the aged, the wives and the children,—all who are helpless and in the present time dependent on the wage-worker. It proposes also to prevent anyone from accumulating wealth. What would be the result if these incentives to work were removed? Those who are naturally lazy, careless and self-indulgent, relieved of their responsibility, or deprived of the possibility of satisfying their ambition for wealth, would do their work in a perfunctory manner unless they were made to suffer, and this would cause discontent. The only ones who would do plenty of work and good work would be those who were conscientious and unselfish, who were ambitious to be highly spoken of, or who loved their work for its own sake. Such, unhappily, form the exception.

(3) As regards the third argument,

THE ARGUMENT FROM NECESSITY,

much might be done to alleviate present conditions, but to remove all the social, physical, mental and moral imperfections which we see around us is beyond the power of man.

And so, dear friends, we see that whether or not Socialism will ultimately be successful in becoming established, there is certain to be a great deal of trouble in the near future. The people are being rapidly awakened out of their mental lethargy and their superstitious reverence for kings and aristocracy and Church. They are seeing that they are not getting their fair share of this world's goods, while others are rolling in luxury. Their appetites and desires prevent them from agreeing that a bare existence is all that is necessary. They see that happiness is needful to make existence desirable. In the meantime, Socialism is the only remedy which seems to them to offer relief.

All men recognize the signs of unrest everywhere manifest. They console themselves with the thought that the world is passing through a stage of transition and that ultimately by human efforts, peace will be obtained, the unrest and discontent will cease, and the present kingdoms, with some changes perhaps, will continue. This is a delusive hope. **Anarchy is bound to prevail, whether Socialism becomes established or not.** If the people are thwarted, they will not rest content till all the present kingdoms and institutions are shattered. The slumbering giant is now too wide awake to permit himself again to be put into bondage. Let us suppose, however, that Socialism will be established, there will require to be armies of public employees, and the individual will sooner or later become the slave of the officials even more than at present. Politics will become still more of a trade than now. Rings and general corruption will be the order of the day. With human nature as it is, force will be necessary to carry out the various measures intended for the public good, and the people, having once tasted the sweets of liberty, and finding their aspirations and desires for freedom and happiness frustrated, will break away from all restraints, and anarchy will be certain to ensue.

But what avail the kindly ways of yore,
The sacred customs and the old-world cries,
If we are linked in heartfelt love no more
By old-world ties?

The envious nations and their rulers keep
Armed watch upon each other all the while;
They prate of friendship, lulling fear to sleep
With treacherous smile.

Race against race, realm against realm, alas!
Creed against creed in enmity are ranged;
The toiler from the thinker, class from class
Severed, estranged.

Oh! finer souls of penetrating ken,
Poets and preachers, in our hearts instil
Humility afresh, and bring to men
Peace and goodwill.

So that our Christmas be no pagan feast,
But we again grow more like to them—
The reverend kings who journeyed from the East
To Bethlehem.

Alfred Austin
(Poet-Laureate).

What the Bible teaches.

Having seen that a time of general anarchy is to be expected in the near future, and that there is no help to be found in man under the present conditions of sin and selfishness, let us turn to the Bible and see whether **it** can throw any light on the problem, and whether there will be any truth in the old adage: that man's extremity is God's opportunity.

In our text for the evening, Haggai II, 6, 7, we find comfort. There we read:—"For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land, and I will shake all nations; and **the desire of all nations shall come.**" What is it that all nations desire? Is it not a good government which will bring peace and contentment? Certainly. In these two verses we read that all nations will be shaken, there will be a world-wide trouble, and that then all nations will have their desire realized. It is for us to see these things beforehand, because forewarned is forearmed. It is a poor man indeed who says: "I shall wait till I see if it comes to pass." That is an expression of unbelief. Rather let us say "If there is a God above, he must surely know all things beforehand, and have foretold sufficient to help and sustain those who believe on him, in order that they may intelligently co-operate with him in the means which he must surely have directed for the good of man."

We are assured through the prophet Haggai that it will be by God that all nations will be shaken, and that the desire of all nations will come. Read the closing verses of the chapter, from the 20th verse—"And again the word of the Lord came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying, Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen (nations); and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, everyone by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, Will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts." This prophecy was fulfilled partially in the time of the return from Babylon when the typical temple was set up; but there can be no doubt that the full application of the prophecy is to the time of trouble with which this Dispensation will close, the time when Christ will take up his great power and reign. Notice how the prophecy speaks of kingdoms and nations being overthrown, and the horses and their riders coming down, everyone by the hand of his brother. This evidently points to a world-wide anarchy. It is evident that Zerubbabel is a type of Christ. Just as Zerubbabel, on the overthrow of Babylon, went to Jerusalem and founded and built the typical temple, so Christ on the downfall of "Babylon the Great" will found and build the great Anti-typical Temple. Our Lord Jesus, the servant of Jehovah, will be made by God as a signet in that day, for he has chosen him. A signet is that which is used for sealing legal documents. Christ will be used as the chosen signet of God. Whatever Christ seals, cannot be broken without incurring the vengeance of God.

Let us now turn to Zephaniah III, 8, 9—"Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms"—that is what is happening now; we find that all the kingdoms are being associated together against the common enemy, the people. The Lord goes on to say why he has determined to gather the nations and assemble the kingdoms. It is—"to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured by the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve him with one consent." First, the world-wide trouble, and **then** the desire of all nations will come.

In the book of Proverbs (XVIII, 14) we are told: "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?" So long as a man can keep up his spirit, it does not matter how weak he may be, he is more or less self-reliant: but once his spirit is broken, all the pith is taken out of him, he feels himself helpless. In the present, as in the past, men think that by their own efforts they will bring about the desire of all nations. The Socialists say: "Just let Socialism get into full swing, and we shall soon renovate the whole earth." The Non-Socialists say: "Let us alone. We shall bring about reforms gradually. Only be patient and by-and-bye there will be peace and contentment throughout the world." The spirits of both parties will require to be broken in order to teach them the folly of self-reliance. Christendom is guilty of the same sin of unbelief which brought about the downfall of the kingdom of Israel. History will repeat itself, but this time on a world-wide scale. It will require a great deal of trouble to break the spirit of mankind; but when it does occur, all will be forced to acknowledge their own helplessness and their need of God. They will return to the Lord, and will implore his aid; and, praise his name, the Lord will help the helpless. "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (Psalm XXXIV, 13).

Turn next to the 12th chapter of Daniel. There we see in the 4th verse regarding "the time of the end,"—the time of the end of the present kingdoms, the time of the end of the present reign of evil,—that "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." With our modern locomotives, steamships, and motor cars, our schools and education bills, no one can doubt that this prophecy is being fulfilled before our eyes; and history tells us that it was never fulfilled till now. It is evident, then, that we must now be living in "the time of the end." That is why Socialism is gaining such power. In the first and second verses of the chapter, we read "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time." Our Lord in quoting these words in the 24th chapter of Matthew, 21st verse, says, "For then shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be (again)." The coming trouble is to be greater than was even the French Revolution, though that was bad enough. It will be the greatest time of trouble that has ever taken place, or ever will take place, in the history of the world.

Having seen that the Scriptures corroborate what we learn from the signs of the times, namely, that there is to be world-wide anarchy at an early date, let us now enquire of the Word of God how the "desire of all nations," good government with peace and contentment, will be attained. Daniel says that "at that time," the time of the end, "Michael shall stand up." The word "Michael" means "One like unto God." These words cannot refer to anyone but our Lord Jesus Christ, the one who is the express image of the Father. He is the great Prince which standeth for the children of Daniel's people. The angel then goes on to tell Daniel "at that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book." Who are Daniel's people? The Israelites. Then, evidently, there is to be a return of the Israelites to God's favour. They have been persecuted all down this Gospel Age, and even before it, but the time is at hand when they will cease to be trodden down of the Gentiles and will return to the favour of God as his chosen people. We see this even now beginning. The land of Palestine is being opened up, and the Jews are fast returning to their native land; but it is not yet time for the complete return of favour.

Verse 2:—"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the

earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." When we couple this with such passages as Revelation XI, 15-19, we see that when Christ's kingdom is set up on the ruins of the present kingdoms, and the Jews return to their own land and to God's favour, the general resurrection of the dead will take place. Revelation XI, 15, reads "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." It is quite evident from this, that Christ is going to take possession of this earth. Verses 16, 17—"And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." Notice what follows (verse 18)—"And the nations were angry, **and thy wrath is come,**" there is to be a time of world-wide trouble among the nations, due to the wrath of God —"and the time of the dead, that they should be judged,"—the resurrection is to take place at the same time,—"and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them that destroy the earth."

In Daniel II, 31-45, we are told about the four great Gentile Empires, which are compared to a great image with head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet part of iron and part of clay. This image was smitten on the feet by a little stone cut out without hands, and was demolished into dust, and scattered till no place was found for it. The stone then grew into a great mountain which filled the whole earth. Daniel explains that this great mountain that will fill the whole earth is the kingdom of our Lord. The seventh chapter of Daniel refers to the same four universal Empires under the figure of four beasts, and describes how one like the Son of man comes with the clouds of heaven to take possession of the kingdom, together with the saints of the most High.

In these and many other passages, it is prophecied that after a great time of trouble in which the kingdoms of this Dispensation will be overthrown, Christ will come and take the power, and will reign with an autocratic rule upon the earth, and bring about the desire of all nations.

Ezekiel, as the mouthpiece of the Lord to Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, said: "And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God; Remove the mitre (R.V.), and take off the crown: this shall not be the same; exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him" (Ezekiel XXI, 25-27). The kingdom of Israel was the kingdom of God. Its kings were always spoken of as sitting upon the throne of the Lord, and its high priest acted as mediator between God and the people. Consequently, when the mitre was removed from the high priest, and the crown from the king, God's kingdom upon earth ceased.

In this prophecy the Lord declared that his kingdom would be no more until one came whose right it is. In the interim of waiting, the Gentiles, who were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians II, 12), were exalted to hold the dominion of the world, but when the "Times of the Gentiles" have expired (Luke XXI, 24), **he** whose right it is will take to himself his great power and reign. Who is this? Undoubtedly it is our Lord Jesus Christ, the greater Son of David. How did he acquire the right to God's kingdom upon earth? He gained it by his voluntary death on the cross. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price." "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and living" (I Corinthians VI, 19, 20; Romans XIV, 9). In Micah IV, 8, the Lord Jesus is spoken of as the "Tower of the flock"—"And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion." The **first** dominion, that which was granted to Adam, and subsequently to Israel, is his by right; and soon he will shatter the present kingdoms, and take the dominion to himself. At the same time, as we have seen, he will bring about the resurrection of the dead, and cause the Jews to return to their own land and to the favour of God.

Before considering how Christ's rule will bring the blessing which man's rule has failed to accomplish; let us see what are the fundamental reasons of man's failures.

(1) The first and chief of these is that **men are sinners, not saints,** and that originally through no fault of their own, but through heredity and environment. Selfishness prevails instead of love. The world, the flesh, and the devil are too strong for men, however well intentioned they may be, unless God is on their side. Even the community of saints of which we read in the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, failed for this very reason. If such men and women failed, how much more likely will it be for the world at large to fail! Sin and selfishness will require to be removed before men are capable of ruling themselves, let alone the world. This reason may be named **the imperfect moral nature of man,** due mainly to heredity and environment. Their **hearts** are not right.

(2) A second important reason is, that no one, neither ruler nor subject, is perfectly sound in mind. We shut up a certain section of mankind in asylums, and we label them "insane." As a matter of fact, there is no one perfectly sane or sound of mind. What is insanity? Insanity simply means lack of judgment; and I do not think anyone here would claim that he is perfectly sound (sane) in judgment. However wisely one man or a body of men may rule, the best make errors in judgment occasionally. A very important cause of errors in judgment is the inability to read motives. Men can only judge by the hearing of the ear, and the seeing of the eyes, they cannot read the hearts. Thus it has become a common proverb that it is human to err. This reason may be called **the imperfect mental nature of man,** due mainly to heredity. Their **heads** are not right.

(3) The third important reason is that there is in everyone more or less physical imperfection. Not one of us is absolutely perfect in body. Some of us are a little stronger than others, but all are more or less weak and prone to disease and accidents of all kinds, and sooner or later everyone of us goes into death. So long as death reigns, there can never be everlasting peace and contentment, because, however happy people may be here, the loss of their nearest and dearest, and the knowledge that sooner or later they too will require to die, must necessarily mar their enjoyment. This reason may be called **the imperfect physical nature of man.** Like the two others, it is mainly due to heredity. Their **bodies** are nor right.

Thus, moral imperfection, mental imperfection, and physical imperfection ending in death, will require to be removed before the desire of all nations can come. Men have been endeavouring to remove these imperfections and to improve their environment, but without success. Christ alone is able to accomplish this great work; and we are assured in the Scriptures that he **will** do so.

How does it come about that all men are more or less imperfect mentally, physically, and morally? It is clearly for the most part due, as I have said, to heredity. Some are apt to say: It is all very well to blame heredity, a man's imperfections are due to his own fault. While this is true, it is not the whole truth. It is true only to a very small extent. Look at the little child.

Don't we often see children born with deformities and other physical imperfections? The same thing is true of their mental condition; and then, as regards their moral nature, you have not exercised your powers of observation if you have not noticed the evidences of moral imperfection even before they are able fully to use their reason. The man who denies the influence of heredity is mentally blind. The Scriptures are in entire accordance with all this. The Psalmist says we are born in sin, and shapen in iniquity (Psalm LI, 5; see also Job XIV, 4). Again, Jeremiah states "The fathers have eaten a sour grape (of sin), and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Jeremiah XXXI, 29). That is how the Bible puts it.

Having seen that we are all sinners, all imperfect, mainly through the law of heredity, it is necessary to inquire—**how did sin enter the world.** Let us trace the law of heredity backwards and we are bound to come to the first man. Is it that the first man, as the Evolution theory states, was only a little removed above an ape, and, therefore, with most of the mental and moral infirmities of a brute? Could God hold such a being responsible? Surely not. When a man commits a crime and is brought before a court of law, and it is certified by medical evidence that the man is insane, no one regards him as responsible. Could you say that a being who was only a remove above the brute was fully responsible? Certainly not. More than that, if God made man, not in his own image as the Bible puts it, but in the image of an ape, it follows that God was the author of sin. Reason and the Word of God both declare the falsity of the Evolution theory.

The Bible account says that all God's works are perfect (Deuteronomy XXXII, 4), that man was perfect at the beginning, and that he fell from this perfection. I have heard some argue against the Scriptural statement, saying: "If man was perfect, how could he sin?" These people do not know what they are talking about. When God created Adam perfect, he did not create him with a fully developed character. Adam's perfection implied a perfect body, and perfect mental and moral faculties, but these faculties required to be developed. His character was a blank; and for the purpose of developing character, he was given a conscience or moral sense, the faculty or power of discerning between right and wrong. He was also given the liberty of his will, in order that he might be free to choose good or evil, and so form a good or wicked character.

Some think God should have made man in such a way that he could not sin, so that all this misery and sickness and death which we see around us, and which we ourselves experience, might have been avoided. Was it not wrong on God's part, they say, that he allowed man to sin? Nothing that God does is wrong. Once we understand the Divine plan of the Ages, we see that to take away the freedom of man's will would be to make him a mere machine. God does not want that kind of creature. He wants a being who will be able to love him spontaneously, and who will worship him in spirit and in truth, and not because he cannot help himself (John IV, 23). Man has nothing whatever to do with the formation of his body and brain. That is God's part. What God leaves us to do with his help, is the development of our mind, and of our character. **It is character that decides destiny.**

According to the Scriptures, Adam fell into sin. He chose the wrong course, and death was the result (I Timothy II, 14). Was God taken by surprise? Not at all. God knew it all beforehand. He had his plan laid out from the beginning. He had foreordained from before the foundation of the world that the "Lamb" should be slain (I Peter I, 18-20). God sentenced the first man to death, and permitted the law of heredity to come into operation, by which all the descendants of the first man have been born in sin, and shared the sentence to death passed upon Adam. That is how Paul puts it in Romans V, 12—"As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

So far, we see only the stern justice of God, but now we shall see the evidence of his love, that true love which is both wise and just. God, having condemned all in the first man, in due time sent his only-begotten Son into this world, in order that he might pay the ransom price for the first man, and so satisfy justice. First, however, he allowed a reasonable interval, viz: 4000 years to elapse, because he wanted to prove to man his need of a Saviour. If God had sent Christ sooner, it would have been always open to question whether man could not have managed to save himself. But by the method which God chose, it was proven conclusively that "None of them by any means can redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" (Psalm XLIX, 7), that "there is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans III, 10). To satisfy perfect justice, which demands an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life, the ransom price to be paid would require to be an exact equivalent, namely, the life of a perfect man. This one would require to be absolutely without sin, because if he were a sinner, justice would require his death, and, therefore, his life would not be his own to give as the ransom for Adam. No descendant of Adam was able to do this, neither the Jew who had the Law to guide him, nor the Gentile who had only the light of his conscience and reason to guide him. The angels also were permitted by God to act in the first Dispensation as judges or saviours, with the result that many of them fell from their first estate. No one was able to save.

Thus **God demonstrated that his way was the only way.** His only-begotten Son, Jesus himself, left the glory he had with his Father in heaven, and partook of flesh and blood, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Hebrews II, 14). Christ being free from sin, justice could not demand his death. It was love that dictated the sacrifice, and he obeyed the dictates of love. As Jesus has paid the price, **the first man must be set free,** that he may have a second opportunity for life or death, and not only the first man but the **whole race.** This is how Paul puts it in Romans V, 18, 19, "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience (the) many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall (the) many be made righteous."

When Christ begins his glorious reign, he will destroy the works of the devil (I John III, 8). These works are **SIN** and **DEATH** with all that these imply. Let us read some passages in connection with this point. I Corinthians XV, 25, 26—"For he (Christ) must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. And the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." What are the enemies of mankind? What enemies stand in the way of good government, peace and contentment? They are moral imperfection, mental imperfection, and physical imperfection. Also the whole social environment is an enemy. All these enemies are to be put under Christ's feet, in order that peace and contentment may reign, and that so the desire of all nations may be realized.

In the book of Revelation (XX, 1, 2), we are assured that **the first enemy that Christ will subdue will be Satan** He will be bound a thousand years, that he may deceive the nations no more till the thousand years are finished, and then he must be loosed for a little season to test the loyalty of the people to God and to righteousness. As the "prince of the power of the air," he has been ruling in the hearts of the children of disobedience, and as the "god of this world," he "hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (Ephesians II, 2; II Corinthians IV, 4). He is "The Prince of this world" (John XIV, 30), and must be deposed in order that Christ may become the ruler. When all the enemies of God and righteousness have been destroyed, then, indeed, the desire of all

nations will have come, for then there will be "no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation XXI, 4). That, however, will not be till the end of Christ's Millennial reign.

How is all this to be brought about? We have seen that the first work will be the binding of Satan. But what about the moral, mental and physical imperfection of man? It is these imperfections which render man helpless in his attempt to govern the world. Will they be removed? Of the three, the condition of the heart is the most important. Are men's hearts going to be put right? Yes. In Ezekiel XXXVI, 26, 27 we read, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Again through the prophet Jeremiah (XXXI, 27-29), we are informed that when the Israelites are restored to their land and God's everlasting favour, in those days the law of heredity will cease: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict: so will I watch over them, to build and to plant, saith the Lord. In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge."

This means that in those days, *i.e.*, during Christ's Millennial reign, no man will suffer mentally, morally, or physically through heredity. How will this be accomplished? Simply by bringing in a new order of things altogether, a new Dispensation. Those in the graves will come forth, and those still living will live on. There will be no more births as we have now, because as long as procreation continues, the law of heredity will continue. Jesus himself said: "In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage" (Matthew XXII, 30). The prophet goes on to declare (Jeremiah XXXI, 30)—"But everyone (who dies) shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape (of sin), **his** teeth shall be set on edge." Each one will suffer for his own misdeeds, and if a man dies at that time, it will not be because his father has transmitted some disease or hereditary weakness to him, but solely because he is a sinner.

This is in accordance with what the Apostle stated, as recorded in Acts III, 23—"Every soul which will not hear that prophet (in the sense of obeying him) shall be destroyed from among the people." The Psalmist also declares (LXXII, 9)—"His enemies shall lick the dust." But this will only be for wilful, persistent disobedience. At that time no one will be ignorant of God's glorious character, and his wonderful plan of salvation. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah XXXI, 27-34). Again, in the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, we read regarding the Millennial Age, the time when the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose (verse 1); "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert" (verses 5 and 6).

Thus the testimony of God's Word, dear friends, is that all moral, mental, and physical imperfections will be done away with by Christ, not at once, but gradually. Everyone will rise from the grave with an imperfect body such as he has now, and with the same imperfect character. If a man is vicious in this life-time he will rise with the same vicious character. Moderately good men will rise moderately good. So it will not do to say: "I am going to get another chance. I will do as I like now." Solomon, speaking to such, said: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment" (Ecclesiastes XI, 9).

In the resurrection, just as it is now, the development of character will be gradual. In the present Dispensation evil is being permitted by God and is prospering. "Now we call the proud happy: yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered" (Malachi III, 15). As a result, the people are pursuing the downward course of sin with all its terrible effects, for it is apparent to every right thinking man that the inhabitants of the world, left to themselves, are not learning righteousness. This is just what Solomon said: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes VIII, 11). Every business man you speak to tells you that there is dishonesty in all commercial concerns, that no business can succeed on lines of strict honesty. In these times it is much more difficult to do good than to do evil. When you do a kindly action to anyone, very often you do not even get thanks for it, and if you are gentle and loving, people look upon you as being soft and try to take advantage of you. If you try to lead an honest, straightforward life, you will necessarily meet with opposition. "All that will live godly in Jesus Christ shall suffer persecution" (I Timothy III, 12). The development of a good character in the present time meets with opposition at every turn. Need we wonder at this when we know that Satan is the prince of the power of the air?

It will be very different when Christ takes his power to reign. He will judge the people with righteousness, and evil will no longer be permitted. Of that time we read: "When the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world **will** learn righteousness." When Christ is reigning, every time a man sins, the penalty will follow swiftly and surely, and, on the other hand, every time a man does a righteous act, the reward will come swiftly and surely. Thus the righteous will be encouraged, and the sinner will be discouraged; and it will be found very soon by the people, that it will pay them best to do good, that the better they are the better they will get on in the world, and the worse they are the worse they will get on,—just the very reverse of what holds at present. The inhabitants of the world will **then** learn righteousness, and as they progress in righteousness, they will flourish (Psalm LXXII, 7); their mental and physical imperfections will disappear until finally they will get back to the perfection lost by Adam.

At first, people will require to be obedient by force, but the necessary punishment will be of a reformative nature, and will be accompanied by evidences of love and strict impartial justice. Everyone will recognize that any punishment he may receive was deserved and was intended for his good. The best guarantee we could have for this is that the judge in that day will be the meek and gentle Jesus, and associated with him will be the saints (Acts XVII, 31; I Corinthians, VI, 2). Gradually the world will come to recognize this, and then their obedience will no longer be because of force, but because of love and appreciation of righteousness.

In Christ's day there will be no errors of judgment, no mis-

takes of any kind on the part of the Great Judge. "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and **he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears**" (Isaiah XI, 1-8).

This chapter is one of the best known of these which describe the Millennial reign of Christ. It describes how such ferocious animals as the wolf, the leopard and the lion will lie down with the lamb and the kid, and how a little child shall lead them. It tells, too, how "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy Kingdom; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." In that day Christ will see into the hearts of men; and will discern the **motives** which underlie their every thought and action.

Not only, however, will Christ be unerring in judgment, and not only will his dealings with all, good and wicked, be recognized eventually to be perfect, just and loving, but his righteous decisions will be backed by the almighty power given by God. He will have full authority from God to execute his wise, just and loving purposes. When he rose from the dead, he said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew XXVIII, 18). He will not require to consider whether his laws and judgments are popular or unpopular. He will not be afraid that in a few years he might be unseated by a general election or a revolution. His Kingdom will be an everlasting Kingdom; and his authority will be absolute, for "he has been highly exalted and given a name above every name." His decisions will be so just and loving and wise, and will be executed so effectually and with such good results, that ultimately every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians II, 10, 11). Thus we see that **Christ's reign will be autocratic.**

At the end of the thousand years, those who love iniquity will be destroyed in the second death; all others will pass on into the Ages to follow, when there will be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither will there be any more pain, for the former things will have passed away. Then the desire of all nations will be completely realized. Sin and selfishness, and all forms of mental and physical imperfection will be completely eradicated. **Satan with all the wicked will be destroyed.** The earth will **yield its increase** (Psalm LXVII, 6), and nothing will be allowed to exist which could hurt or destroy. Finally, there will be perfect communion of all men with God and with each other, for all will love the Lord their God with all their heart, and mind, and soul and strength, and their neighbour as themselves. There will be absolutely nothing to mar the everlasting peace and contentment.

The dominion over the perfect earth will then be given over to man under God's sovereignty, because man will then be perfect not only in body and mind, but also in heart, in character. All will be able to rule themselves. As the guiding principle will be no longer selfishness as at present, but love, doubtless the form of government which will be successfully adopted, will be on the lines now advocated by Socialism.

In closing, I desire to urge upon you the desirability of believing in Christ now, and of accepting the gracious privilege of becoming members of his body. If we follow in his footsteps now, we shall share in his resurrection, and shall be associated with him in his glorious reign. As we read: "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (II Timothy II, 11, 12). This will mean a life of self-denial and sacrifice, doing good to all men as we have opportunity, but especially to the household of faith. It will mean a great deal of persecution and contradiction of sinners. But though we shall have tribulation, the peace of God will rule in our hearts, and we shall have the joy of the Lord. I trust that all of us who take up our cross and follow Jesus, will overcome evil with good and endure to the end, and that for the joy set before us we shall endure the cross, and despise the shame, looking unto Jesus the Author and finisher of our faith. If we do, we shall be counted as overcomers. To such Jesus says: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." "To him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Revelation II, 10, 26, 27; III 21). Let us pray for one another that we may all be faithful unto death, so that we may all obtain the crown of life.

Amen.

O HAIL, happy day, that speaks our trials ended!
Our Lord has come to take us home;
O hail, happy day!
No more by doubts or fears distressed,
We now shall gain our promised rest,
And be for ever blest! O hail, happy day!

Swell loud the glad note, our bondage now is over;
The Jubilee proclaims us free;
O hail, happy day!
The day that brings a sweet release,
That crowns our Jesus Prince of Peace,
And bids our sorrows cease! O hail, happy day!

O hail, happy day! that ends our tears and sorrows,
That brings us joy without alloy;
O hail, happy day!
There peace shall wave her sceptre high,
And love's fair banner greet the eye,
Proclaiming victory! O hail, happy day!

We hail thy bright beams, O morn of Zion's glory!
Thy blessed light breaks on our sight;
O hail, happy day!
Fair Beulah's fields before us rise,
And sweetly burst upon our eyes
The joys of Paradise! O hail, happy day!

Thrice hail, happy day! when earth shall smile in gladness,
And Eden bloom without a tomb;
O hail, happy day!
Where life's pellucid waters glide,
Safe by the dear Redeemer's side,
Forever we'll abide! O hail, happy day!

There is Another King.

By Brother James Hay.

THE grandest truth proclaimed by the Apostles next to the redeeming work of Salvation through the Cross of Christ, is the message of Jesus as the future King of mankind. Wherever the Apostles went they declared the Gospel of the Kingdom; and believers embraced the blessed hope of salvation through Christ their King. Their testimony was not welcomed by all; yea, many bitterly opposed the message and looked upon it as if it were the advocacy of a rival to the existing rulers. This was the manner in which the message of Paul and Silas was treated by the unbelieving Jews in Macedonia:—"The Jews which believed not . . . assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them (Paul and Silas) out to the people, and when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that **there is another king, one JESUS**" (Acts XVII, 2-7). This accusation is a grand truth, even though it was uttered by the enemies of the truth. We cannot always go to enemies for the truth. For example—when the Jews charged Jesus with making himself equal with God, and accused him of blasphemy, we cannot accept their words as truth, for Jesus never claimed to be more than the **Son** of God:—In John V, 18 we read—"The Jews sought the more to kill him, because he . . . said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God," and in John X, 33-36—"The Jews answered him (Jesus) saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them . . . Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, **I am the SON of God?**" But in the instance quoted from the seventeenth chapter of Acts, we are justified in taking the charge of Paul's persecutors and holding it forth as the truth.

Why should the Apostle and the others have been called upon to suffer for preaching Christ as a Spiritual King? The answer is because the natural man can only understand natural things (I Corinthians II, 14). Being actuated by a wrong spirit, they used the claims of truth in a wrong manner against the servants of the Lord. The Apostle was not proclaiming the cause of a rival king awaiting somewhere in the earth an auspicious moment to advance his kingdom; he was announcing the Messiah of Israel as a **Supernatural King**; for Christ had gone to Heaven and would never be a king in the flesh.

In whatever way persecutions arise, they are for our good. Persecution is a Christian privilege. It is a mark of Divine approval, as we read in II Thessalonians I, 4, 5—"We ourselves glory in you . . . for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer;" and all the godly of this Age are assured of persecutions, for in II Timothy III, 10-12 we read—"Thou hast fully known my (Paul's) . . . persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me . . . what persecutions I endured; but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Christ told us that as he was treated so should we be, yea, he declared that **all persecutions arise from those who are ignorant of God**:—"If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you . . . All these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me" (John XV, 20, 21).

The condition of the world of humanity during the past sixty centuries warrants us in stating that **a new order of things is a pressing necessity.** The world needs another kind of king, a Divine King. God's permission of present Rulers is preparatory for the human heart to accept in the due time the Ruler whom He has elected to be their King. For some five hundred years, from the Exodus till Samuel, the Israelites recognized God over them. God was their Judge from Egypt, their Law-giver from Sinai, and their King from the time of entering the promised land. They looked to their Invisible Ruler. But in the days of Samuel they rejected the Lord as their King and desired to be ruled over after the same manner as the surrounding Nations, who did not know or seek the Lord. Similar signs are manifest among many Christians. They begin well, but afterwards are overcome by another spirit, and become much like those who are not Christians; **they look to human rulers, rather than to God.**

However, God recognized the new kingdom as his—in a typical sense,—especially in the days of David and Solomon; but it was not long until the worldly spirit developed into idolatry and unbelief—hastening their ruin. So hardened and rebellious were they to the warnings of God's prophets, that finally this solemn **decree** went forth from God through Ezekiel—"Remove the diadem, take off the crown . . . I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, **until he come whose right it is**; and I will give it him" (Ezekiel XXI, 25-27). This decree was executed in the days of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, B.C. 606.

A proof of the application of this prophecy to Christ at his Second Advent, appears simplified by the interpretation of similar expressions occurring in the New Testament, such as in Luke XIX, 11-14—"He (Jesus) spake a parable . . . because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy **till I come;**" in John XXI, 21-23—"Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man (John) do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry **till I come,** what is that to thee?" and in I Corinthians XI, 26—"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death **till he come.**"

It is not a little remarkable that this great decree of God was carried out exactly in the midst of all known prophetic time. If we reckon from the year 3126 B.C., the end of the first Adam's "Day" (a period of a 1000 years after the Fall) to October 1914 A.D., the beginning of the last Adam's "Day" (the period of 1000 years during which the last Adam will hold universal empire), we shall find that the length of the period which intervened was 5040 years, and that it was in the centre of this interval that Israel lost the Kingdom, and its Diadem and Crown were decreed to the Messiah. (See No. III on Chart). Call to mind those memorable words which Habakkuk prayed (III, 2)—"O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy." This is what God did. In the midst of the wrath period, he remembered mercy, and promised it under Christ—when he should come forth as King. Hosea (III, 4, 5) has the same thought in mind, for he says that Israel would abide many days without a king, and in the long interregnum (2520 symbolic days or years) would be beneath other kings; and then, like Daniel, he, under inspiration, penetrates the centuries and sees Israel returning and seeking the Lord their God, and David their promised king, and fearing the Lord and his goodness in the latter days. Daniel likens Christ

to a stone which smites the Metallic Image; and again to a Son of Man blessing all the world. Long in advance of the due time, the appointment of their final king had to be vindicated by his trial for the position. Jesus in the flesh, is the Shiloh who was to come (Genesis XLIX, 10). The crown and diadem were taken off in B.C. 606, but the Sceptre was not withdrawn from Judah until the appointed heir to David's throne came, even Shiloh the Prince of Peace.

In his resurrection, Jesus, the exalted Spiritual creature, the Lord of Glory, holds as a gift from God the Sceptre of promise, the title to authority, as the future King of kings, and Lord of lords over the Universe of angels and men. There has been and still is a false idea amongst kings and emperors, that they reign by a **Divine right.** They are undoubtedly **permitted** by God, but they hold no Divine right; for the word of truth tells us, they are to be overthrown. He, whose right it is, under Divine promise, will at the due time receive the crown, and then unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

In the days of his flesh, he taught his disciples to pray—"Thy Kingdom come" and counselled his own people to seek first the Kingdom. When standing before Pilate, he declared his Kingdom was not of this world (Greek—Kosmos—arrangement), adding that he was destined to be a King, and that for this cause he came into the world (John XVIII, 36, 37):—"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, . . . but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice." That Jesus knew his Kingdom was not imminent is evident from Luke XIX 11, 12 already quoted. He gave the parable of the pounds to teach the futurity of the Kingdom. In Luke XXII, 28-30 he sought to assure his loyal disciples of a future recompense of a share in the Kingdom to which he was appointed—"Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The thief on the cross petitioned our Lord, with the thought in his mind of Christ's future coming in his Kingdom (Luke XXIII, 42, 43 in "Rotherham's" translation, which reads—"Jesus! remember me whensoever thou shalt come into thy kingdom. And he said unto him—Verily I say unto thee this day: With me shalt thou be in Paradise,")—shows the Saviour's reply in harmony with the appeal. When we contemplate the simplicity of the prayer, we are forced to the conclusion, that the dying thief had a clearer conception of the teachings of the Messiah, than many a living thief to-day who is robbing Christ's teaching of its real message, under the garb of the Christian Ministry.

The temptation of our Lord by Satan as recorded in Luke IV, 5, 6 was a real one—"And the devil, taking him (Jesus) up into a high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it." The offer of immediate power over all flesh, was in Satan's authority for a time, and could have been transferred to the Son of God for the remainder of his lease of time, had he acknowledged Satan as another Deity. Why did Christ decline the offer? Because the offer came from the wrong quarter and at the wrong time. Later, in the days of the Saviour's ministry, similar temptations came to him, as recorded in John VI, 15—"When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone," and in John VII, 3-6—"His (Jesus') brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world . . . And Jesus said unto them, My time is not **yet** come."

If Christ did not expect to be a king in the days of his flesh, why did he fulfil the prophecy of Zechariah IX, 9 as recorded in John XII, 12-16?—"the people . . . when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried; Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. These things understood not his disciples at the first, but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him." This transaction furnished a test to the Jewish Nation. They were Rome's prisoners, and Jesus would encourage them to look to him as their King. They were sin's prisoners, and Christ desired they should recognize in him the Lamb of God to take away their sin. They would soon be Death's prisoners; for with the coming death of Christ, they would have decreed to them their National death, and he would, in this strange act, tell them that he was their only deliverer. Was it not promised to Mary that her son would receive the throne of his father David? (Luke I, 32, 33). Had that time come when her son rode triumphantly into the city of the great king? He was indeed the King of the Jews, but his death had to precede his ruling over them. Pilate declared him as such to the Nation (John XIX, 14), and although afterwards he delivered him up to be crucified, he nevertheless retained the Saviour's claim and title, commanding the triple superscription to be placed on his cross.

Whilst Christ as a king in the flesh would far excel in power and wisdom and character any other king, yet, his beneficial influence upon Israel and the world could not be lasting to his subjects for the reason stated by the Lord in John XII, 24—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." The prophets plainly predicted the Second Advent as the time for his Kingship over mankind, as shown in Isaiah XXXII, 1—"Behold a king shall reign in righteousness," and Jeremiah XXIII, 5—"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." (See also Isaiah XXXIII, 20, 22; Jeremiah XXX, 7, 9; Micah V, 1, 4). Though Israel has remained many days without a king, yet, soon they are to come out of their symbolic Hadean condition, and in these latter days, A.D. 1878-1915, return and seek the Lord and his goodness, and their Antitypical King David, "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days" (Hosea III, 4, 5).

Jesus is now King to the Saints. Whilst the Scriptures clearly speak of Jesus as King at his Second Advent, yet he is King over the Saints throughout this Age. How do we know this? By experience. Seeing that Christ's Kingdom destroys the old order of sin and death over the world, and brings in the new order of righteousness and life, so in a faith sense this is reckoned as having been done in us now. Our conversion from sin leads us to consecration (which if rightly entered into, should be followed by water baptism), a step signifying our death to the old life, and resurrection to the new life in Christ, then the reckoned new creature receives the Anointing of the Spirit or power of God. This class seeks the Kingdom or Reign of Christ in their hearts by faith. By faith they realize the powers of the world to come, and gladly surrender their whole life to their Divine King.

Moses is a type of the Christian. By faith, he forsook Egypt, and endured as seeing him who is invisible. From the time that we forsake the world and its present rulers, **our interest in the fifth Monarchy begins.** From that time we enlist in the Lord's army—the true future Salvation Army,—the real Church Army,—the Soldiers of our King. To all of us, the Apostle gives counsel to put on the whole armour of God. He tells us that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God. Dear Friends, are we conscious that Jesus is our King? **Have we crowned him Lord of our little all?** If he has become our Saviour from sin, our Exemplar in conduct, our Sanctifier in the Spirit, our Priest to guide us to God, our Leader in the paths of righteousness, our Commander in the battles for holiness, if we have become members of the Holy Nation and are enrolled in the Lamb's Book of Life,—then we must have learnt that Christ is our King and to his Banner we must be true. The Christian's fight is one of faith! His conflict or warfare is against the world-evil without, the flesh-evil within, and the devil-evil above. He has to overcome the errors of Christendom and Heathendom, likewise the power of Mammon in the Religious World, and the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. All his struggles for victory must continue right to the end, for the Saviour King has said:—"Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a Crown of Life." These constitute the Lord's Army of the future. They are the "Strong Ones" with whom he divides the spoil of his triumphs.

Why cannot the Church conquer the world now? Because Jesus could not do it before he died. When Paul says in II Timothy II, 8—"Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my Gospel," he intimates that the resurrection of Christ precedes the triumph over the world. The sufferings of Christ continue in all the members of his body. The Embryo Kingdom still suffers violence, until the due time for the King of Glory to come in the power of his Millennial Kingdom. Happy are they who have accepted Christ's Kingship, and recognized themselves as his present subjects, who have sworn allegiance to him; for by and bye they will be the future Rulers with the King of Kings for whom the world blindly waits; Revelation XX, 6—"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall **reign with him a thousand years.**" Truly there is "another King," but unlike the kings of this world, his power is unlimited, and his Kingdom will be an everlasting Kingdom. The Saints will always be his subjects, even as Christ will always be the subject of his Father—"When all things shall be subdued unto him (Jesus), then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him (Jehovah) that put all things under him (Jesus), that God may be all in all" (I Corinthians XV, 28).

The Apostle Paul was a powerful advocate of the fifth Kingdom's universal power; and indicates the time for its Dominion to be synchronous with the raising up of the world to life. According to I Corinthians XV, 24-26, the work of this mighty King will be the subjugation of every power active against God and his truth—"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Christ will put all these down. He will put them down and keep them down. Nay, more, He will put them down in the sense predicted by Isaiah (XXVI, 13, 14)—"O Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us . . . They are dead, they shall not live (again); they are deceased, they shall not rise (again); therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish."—The prophet takes the standpoint of all the Lord's people looking backwards, and shows them the death and destruction of their former rulers. Christ will bind the strong man and spoil his goods. All rule; all authority; and all power; be they in the world or in the Nominal Church, wherever such have been abused and have not answered the approval of God, will be taken away, and his own rule, authority and power will be set up.

Every power emanating from Satan, through his deceived representatives in every conceivable manner of operation, viz:—The power of sin; darkness, error, ignorance, superstition, idolatry, priestcraft, the power of the air (Spiritualism), yea, all the powers of the Age, even those Gigantic Systems rebelling against the Truth, called the "Beast" and the "False Prophet," will be dealt with speedily, after the Great God has set his King upon the Hill of Zion;—"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psalm II, 8, 9); and they will be cast alive into the burning lake (Revelation XIX, 20). Their power must necessarily be broken to pieces by the Stone Kingdom (Daniel II, 34, 35, 44) for Immanuel to effectually set up a Kingdom to remain; in harmony with which we read in Revelation XI, 15—"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." And in Psalm CX, 1-3—"The LORD said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy foot-stool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. **Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.**" Paul shows most convincingly that the reign of Christ follows as a Spiritual consequence upon the Redeemer's sacrifice. He says—"This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool" (Hebrews X, 12, 13). All incorrigible enemies of whatever nature, angelic or human, will be destroyed.

Why should Christ destroy his enemies in the future, when he told us to love our enemies? The destruction of his enemies will not take place until first, his love, now and in the future Age, has been tendered through us to the personal consciousness of every soul. He who is to judge the world and the angels, the dead and the quick or living, will, in the day of his universal power over all flesh, bring the **due time** to every creature not previously blessed.

Grace has its limitation. Character has its formation for good or for evil. Paul shows that some even now, become enemies to the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction (Philippians III, 18, 19). Christ shows a serious accountability when he says "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me" (Luke XIX, 27). Again, when in the world's future trial and judgment time (the Millennium), the Great Shepherd King of the sheep rewards the righteous with entrance into the blessings of the Kingdom,—the goats, who will not submit to the Kingdom and the King, are to be sentenced to the cutting-off from life, because they have developed a "cursed" or "filthy" condition, a filthiness which cannot be cleansed (Revelation XXII, 11).

A description of the Millennial triumph of the world's future King, when, as the Viceroy of God, he will, with his associates, rule over mankind, is described in the ninety-seventh Psalm. The effect of the Kingdom is graphically described by David in the seventy-second Psalm, where he shows that finally the whole earth will be filled with the Divine Glory.

It is reasonable to suppose that the reign of Christ in its manifold operations for the restitution of all things lost through the Fall, **will deal first with the living nations.** We are told that all the dead will stand before God, and the books will be opened and also the book of life (the opportunity to live).

But we are told also, that previous to this the sea will give up the dead that are in it,—*i.e.*, the troubled, restless, anarchistic masses will be quelled by the voice of the Great King. When he will say—"Peace, be still," to the troubled elements, there will be a great calm;—then death will deliver up its occupants to restitution powers, aud then, working still backwards, the powers of the Great Life Restorer will deliver the prisoners of Hades—and thus all will be brought to judgment—until the last enemy that shall be destroyed, will be death, Adamic death. If the soul is immortal, then there is no death to be destroyed; but it says in Revelation XXI, 4—"there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Death will be destroyed by a complete resurrection (Acts XXIV, 15). The Second death to the wilfully wicked, is not an enemy, it is a friend of such, and therefore will not be destroyed. The fall of the world in the first Adam found our first father a captive of Sheol at the end of 930 years, leaving the remaining 70 years of his 1000-year-day to his dying posterity; so it is likely (seeing that the Kingdom cometh not with observation) that during the world's Rise, the Great King will, during the first 70 years of the 1000-year judgment day, deal with those in the sea and death conditions, and so gradually prepare the earth for receiving back during the remaining 930 years those who are in the Hadean condition. He will bring to pass the resurrection of all as far back as Adam, so that all may be blessed with that gracious opportunity of being saved from **their** enemies of sin and death, that they may serve God without fear in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life,—of that everlasting life which Jesus the King will impart to them, when they become the loyal subjects of his everlasting Kingdom.

As Pharaoh commanded all Egypt to bow the knee to Joseph, so God has decreed that to Jesus, every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord.

As we contemplate the grand purposes of God to be accomplished during the reign of the Anointed, we take our stand with the Evangelical Prophet who testifies—"Unto us a child is born (a tangible evidence from God has been given that he will bless through the promised seed all the families of the earth), Unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counseller, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. **Of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end,** upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal (righteous jealousy) of the Lord of hosts will perform this" (Isaiah IX, 6, 7).

Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious,
See the "Man of sorrows" now;
From the fight return victorious;
Every knee to Him shall bow.

Sinners in derision crowned him,
Mocking thus the Saviour's claim;
Saints and angels crowd around Him,
Own His title, praise His Name.

Hark! the bursts of acclamation!
Hark! those loud triumphant chords!
Jesus takes the highest station;
Oh! what joy the sight affords!

Crown Him! Crown Him! angels, Crown Him!
Crown the Saviour, King of Kings!
Crown Him! Crown Him! Christians, Crown Him!
Crown your Saviour, King of Kings.

Amen.

Rest and Restitution.

By Brother John Edgar.

AT the beginning of the meeting Brother Holt, who acted as chairman, read Leviticus XXV. Brother Edgar then gave the following discourse:—

The diagram entitled "Rest and Restitution" (No. VIII in the Chart), to which I desire to draw your attention this afternoon, shows, like all the other diagrams illustrating the time-prophecies, that God has been overruling all things for his own purpose, and for the eventual good of all. Although, apparently, men have been left to the freedom of their will, there is a certain limit beyond which God does not permit them to exercise this freedom. He restrains the wrath of men at a certain point. Again, the Lord does not allow things to happen, except at such times and in such a manner as suits his purposes in the great Plan of Salvation. Had men been left entirely to the freedom of their will, their evil desires and lack of judgment would have precipitated matters, but God restrained them, as we read in Psalm LXXVI, 10—"Surely the wrath of men shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."

In describing the diagram, I shall point out first the features with regard to "Rest," and afterwards those with regard to "Restitution."

Rest.

At a certain time in the world's history God showed special favour to a few individuals, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, known as the Patriarchs. On the death of Jacob, or Israel as he was also called, the Patriarchal Age ended. During the Jewish Age which followed, God bestowed his favour upon all the family of Israel, saying to them, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos III, 2). As a mark of his special care of them, he placed them under slavery in order that through trials and affliction they might be developed in character. When in due time they were sufficiently numerous to form a nation, he delivered them out of Egypt by his mighty hand and out-stretched arm, and, after giving them the law and further preparing them in the wilderness, he allowed them to come into Canaan, the land he had promised to their fathers.

The reason why God took such particular pains with the nation of Israel was because he intended that they should observe certain ordinances and pass through certain experiences which would form a valuable lesson to the Church in the Gospel Age, and to the world, including the Israelites themselves, in the Millennial Age. As the Apostle Paul says, "The law was a shadow of good things to come," and the experiences of the children of Israel "happened unto them as types (see margin), and are written for our admonition on whom the ends of the Ages have come" (Hebrews X, 1; I Corinthians X, 11). Such being the case, it is very important for us as members of the Church of Christ to enquire into the ordinances and experiences of the nation of Israel, in order to find out the lessons which God intended we should learn from them.

When we do this, we find that many of the commandments

referred to certain **times and seasons,** and that God was very particular that the Israelites should observe these. We have an instance of this in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, verses 8-11—"Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt do no work." Six days they were to do their work, and the seventh day they were to rest. That must have typified something. Again, as our Brother read at the beginning of the meeting, they were to cultivate the land for six **years,** and on the seventh year the land was to have its rest. The seventh year was a sabbath year, or rest year, for the word "sabbath" means "rest."

Why did God set apart a seventh day and a seventh year as a sabbath day and a sabbath year? The answer is to be found in Exodus XX, 11—"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

When did God's sabbath or rest begin, and **when will it end?** We learn from the first chapter of Genesis that the last work of creation was man. For a short period thereafter man had dominion over the earth under God's sovereignty. We should understand, therefore, that God's rest did not begin until the Fall. From that time till the Flood, God permitted the angels, and since then he has permitted Satan, to exercise the controlling power. During the Millennial Age Christ will reign. Accordingly, it will not be until "the thousand years" are finished and God has resumed his sovereignty, that his day of rest will be ended. Thenceforward the condition will be as it was during the short period of innocence in the Garden of Eden, the perfect man will once more reign over the earth under the sovereignty of God. We see, then, that God's rest, his seventh day, began at the Fall and will not be complete till the end of the Millennial Age.

There are two reasons for believing that the short period from the Creation to the Fall lasted two years. One of these reasons is detailed in *Studies in the Scriptures*, volume III, page 127. The other is that the harmony of the diagram we are now considering, as well as that of diagrams III and IV, requires these two years. Granting this, we know from our study of Bible Chronology (see *Studies in the Scriptures*, volume II, page 42), that the period from the Fall till October 1874 A.D., when our Lord was due to return, was six thousand years. One thousand years more will bring us to the time when Christ will begin to deliver the Kingdom to the Father. Thus, God's rest day will be in all a period of seven thousand years. It is probable that the six "days" which preceded it, the six "days" of creation, were also periods of seven thousand years. Consequently, we are now in the beginning of the forty-ninth thousand-year period, and the one which will follow is the fiftieth.

Since the Fall, then, God has been resting. It seems very strange when you come to think of it, to say that God has been resting, and yet, as we said at the beginning of this discourse, he has been overruling all things. **He has been working during his rest day,** working and resting at the same time. This would seem to be irreconcilable. How do we explain it? In John V, 17 we read—"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." You remember the occasion on which Jesus uttered these words. The Jews had been finding fault with him for working on the sabbath or rest day. What kind of work was he doing? He was curing the man who had been paralysed from his birth. You remember how often Jesus did this kind of work, healing the blind and the sick, on the sabbath day. It is evident, then, that acts of mercy are not included in the command to do no work on the sabbath day. Why? Because love is the fulfilling of the law (Romans XIII, 10). Jesus said that the sum and substance of the law was embodied in that word "love."—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew XXII, 37-40).

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," Jesus said. By this he obviously meant that though fully four thousand years of God's Great Sabbath Day had passed, nevertheless his Father had been working up till that time. The works that the Father had been engaged upon during his sabbath or rest-day had been works of mercy, and there is nothing in this contradictory to God's great **Law of Love.** Quite to the contrary, love dictated these works.

You remember how Jesus put it on another occasion. He said to the Pharisees that if an ox or an ass (many of the manuscripts put it "son," not "ass") belonging to any of them should fall into a pit, would they not immediately draw it out on the sabbath day? (Luke XIV, 5, Diaglott). That is work, is it not? Yes. But it is a work of mercy, the kind of work which is dictated by love. How much more, then, would God during his rest-day so restrain the wrath of man, and so overrule all things, that eventually man's salvation from the miry clay of sin and from the pit of death might be accomplished! Above all, it was God's great love which dictated the rescue of his well-beloved Son from the pit, the grave, on his great sabbath day. The raising of our Lord from the dead was the beginning of the "New Creation" and was the supreme evidence of the power of God (Ephesians I, 18-23). Yet it was done on God's rest day. The reason was that both love and justice demanded the raising of Christ to a new nature:—"Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he (the innocent one) should be holden of it" (Acts II, 24).

Having seen that the long period from the Fall till the end of the Millennium represents God's great sabbath day of seven thousand years, let us now consider **the same period from another standpoint.** The Apostle Peter in his second epistle (III, 8) says "Be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. Most Christians read this verse as indicating that time is nothing to God; but the Apostle is speaking more particularly here. The passage with its connections reads thus:—"The heavens and the earth which are now . . . are reserved unto fire against **the day of judgment** and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-wards, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But **the day of the Lord** will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (verses 7-10). God has been longsuffering in allowing the long period of six thousand years of evil, in order that all men may learn by bitter experience the dreadful results of sin. The seventh period of one thousand years he has set apart for the purpose of bringing all men to repentance. You will notice that the Apostle in this passage is speaking of the day of judgment, the day of the Lord, and that he is explaining that the "day of the Lord" is as one thousand years, and one thousand years as one day.

From this standpoint, then, dear friends, the period of seven thousand years from the Fall to the end of the Millennium represents a **WEEK,** each "day" of which is a period of one thousand years. The first period of one thousand years forms the **First Adam's "day,"** referred to by God when he said to Adam, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis II,

17). Adam died at the age of 930 (Genesis V, 5). The seventh period of one thousand years is called the "day of judgment of ungodly men." It is the **Last Adam's "day,"** the sabbath day of the Lord.

Jesus said "The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day" (Matthew XII, 8). If he is **Lord of the Sabbath day,** we should expect surely, that he would come at the **beginning** of that day. It would be a very strange thing indeed if this seventh thousand-year period was set apart for Christ, and he, the Lord of that day, should not come at the beginning of it. He would naturally come on that date to take possession. That is one proof that the Lord was due to return in October, 1874 A.D.; but there are many other proofs.

Why, then, some will say, do we not see him? Does the Bible not say that every eye shall see him? Yes, eventually every eye will see him. Everyone will recognize his presence, and every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. But one of the verses we have just quoted (II Peter III, 10) tells us that **he is to come as a thief.** How does a thief come? Is it with a shout and the sound of a trumpet? Surely not. Otherwise everyone would be alarmed and on his guard. No, a thief comes quietly, unobservedly, and generally during the night, when people are sleeping and nobody is aware of his presence, unless some in the house may happen to be awake and on the lookout; and these, as they become aware of his presence, awaken the others and pass on the message to them.

You remember that during the forty days after his resurrection Jesus was invisible, except on a few occasions when he revealed himself to his disciples. None of the world saw him, as he had said himself "The world seeth me no more" (John XIV, 19). So it is now. None but the disciples of Jesus see him, and even these see him only with the eyes of their understanding. That is how the Lord came in 1874 A.D., not with a literal shout and the sound of a literal trumpet, but with the symbolic shout and the symbolic trumpet of present truth. This is the seventh trumpet, the trump of God (I Thessalonians IV, 16; Revelation X, 7). The six trumpets of Revelation (chapters VIII and IX) have already sounded, and the seventh is even now sounding; but the only ones who have ears to hear are those who, like their Master, are meek and lowly in heart. These, as they are becoming awakened, are arousing others, and giving them the Glad Tidings of the Lord's presence.

The Lord came, then, in 1874 A.D. as a thief, quietly, unobservedly; and he is stealing something. **He is stealing the kingdoms of this world.** But he is not stealing in the ordinary sense of the term. They are his by right. He purchased the first dominion, that which was lost by Adam, and the price he paid for it was his own precious blood. But he is taking the dominion quietly, unobservedly, just as a thief would do, and only those watching see him. We learn from Matthew XXIV, 43, that Satan was taken unawares by our Lord's coming in 1874, and none of the saints knew the date until nearly a year after October 1874 (See *Studies in the Scriptures,* vol. IV, page 612). Before our Lord can take the dominion, he must first bind Satan. Jesus said (Matthew XII, 28, 29) "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house." **The Lord is present now, binding Satan by means of the Truth,** and setting up his kingdom, but the end will not be for a little time yet. A few more years, a very few, and the Lord will have the "strong man," Satan, bound, and all the kingdoms of this world will be his. This will necessitate a great time of trouble at an early date, but after the storm is past, there will be peace.

We have seen that God commanded the Israelites to hold the seventh day and the seventh year as the sabbath day and sabbath year. **Who were these Israelites?** They were the seed or children of Abraham; and as Abraham typified God (Romans IV, 17, margin), and the seed or children of Abraham typified the seed or children of God, so the keeping of the seventh day and the seventh year by the Israelites typified the sabbath or rest of the children of God. During the sabbath of the Lord, the Millennial Age, into which we have now entered, the children of God will undoubtedly be Jesus Christ the head, and the Church which is his body, glorified. It follows that the Apostles and all the noble martyrs and others who have suffered and died for Christ's sake during this Gospel Age have now entered into their rest, and that we who are alive and remain, if we are faithful unto death (and may we all be faithful, and pray for one another and help one another to be faithful, unto death), we who remain shall not sleep when we die, but shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and be for ever with the Lord and our Brethren. Then we, too, shall have entered into God's rest (I Corinthians XV, 51, 52).

In Leviticus XXV, 4, we are told that during the seventh year the land was to get its rest. **What did the land represent?** The land of Canaan undoubtedly represented the whole world as Christ's inheritance, the inheritance of the children of God. It was the land promised by God as a gift to the seed of Abraham, and in Romans IV, 13, we are told that the inheritance of Abraham and his seed is to be the world:—"For the promise that he should be **the heir of the world** was not to Abraham or his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." We should understand, then, that the whole world (not only the earth but all the heathen or nations) as Christ's inheritance (Psalm II, 8) will have its rest during the great thousand-year sabbath under the reign of Christ, head and body.

During this seventh day, the Church glorified and associated with Jesus their head, **will be working,** and **yet have entered into their rest.** Why is that? Because their works will be works of mercy; raising mankind out of the pit of death, and bringing them up to the perfection lost by Adam. By the end of that seventh day the whole creation itself also shall have been delivered from the bondage of corruption and have come into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Romans VIII, 21). All those who are obedient will become in their turn the children of God, and as such will inherit the earth and enter into their rest.

Seven Times.

We have seen that these seven thousand-year periods represent not only "days," but also "years." As an illustration of this use of the term "year," Isaiah LXIII, 4—"The year of my redeemed is come," may be quoted, referring evidently to the seventh thousand-year period.

When I was in America a few months ago, a Sister in the Bible House drew my attention in this connection to Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great tree (Daniel IV). In his dream Nebuchadnezzar saw a great tree which reached up to heaven, and was seen from all the earth. The beasts of the field were protected by its shadow and the birds dwelt among its boughs, and it supplied food for all. By the command of the watcher, this tree was cut down, but the stump of its roots was left and bound with iron and brass. The figure then changed to a man degraded to a beast-like condition, until **seven times** had passed over him; and **the purpose** is stated to be that "the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."

Brother Russell in volume II of *Studies in the Scriptures,* page 94, states that this remarkable tree, in its glory and beauty, represented the first dominion of earth given to the human race in its representative and head, Adam. When sin entered, the commandment came to hew down the tree; and the lower creation no more found shelter, protection and blessing under its influence. Yet the "root"—God's purpose and plan of the

Restitution—continued, though bound with strong fetters so that it should not sprout until the Divinely appointed time. Ever since the sentence passed, the human race has been beastlike and degraded. The race must remain in its degradation, under the dominion of evil, until the lesson has been learned that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

True to Daniel's interpretation, we are told that "All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar." "There fell a voice from heaven saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and **seven times shall pass over thee,** until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." Nebuchadnezzar lost his reason and his kingdom, and it was not until the seven "times" of years were fulfilled that he regained them:—(verse 34)—"And at the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned to me, and I blessed the most High." It was not until he recognized the sovereignty of God, that he regained his dominion—(verse 36)—"At that time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my councillors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me."

These "seven times" we know from Brother Russell's interpretation in the second volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*, page 97, represented the "Seven Times of the Gentiles," the period from 606 B.C. till October 1914 A.D., for it was under this Nebuchadnezzar that Israel was carried away captive to Babylon, when the crown of God's Kingdom was removed from the King of Judah, and the "Seven Times" began. In harmony with this, God portrayed the Gentile governments to Daniel as so many beasts, while the Kingdom is represented as given to one like unto the Son of man.

But there is another and larger aspect in which we can regard these seven "times." The tree, the original dominion, was hewn down on account of Adam's disobedience, and during the six thousand-year periods which followed, man has been given over by God to a "mind void of judgment" (Romans I, 28, margin), and has been under the dominion of Satan. In the seventh "time" or thousand-year period, under the rule of Christ, the great Mediator between God and men, man will gradually recover his reason, but it will not be till the end of it, when the "Seven Times" are fulfilled, that his reason and his original dominion will be fully restored to him. The dream of its fulfilment upon Nebuchadnezzar is specially noteworthy when we remember that, like Adam, he was made the representative ruling head of human dominion (compare Daniel II, 37, 38 with Genesis I, 28), and that afterwards, because of sin, he received the "seven times" of punishment, at the end of which his reason returned, and his dominion was restored to him. "At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase" (Daniel IV, 36, 37).

Restitution.

We see from Leviticus XXV, 1-4, that the Israelites from the date of their entrance into Canaan, counted each seventh year as a sabbath or rest year. Each year began at the time of the passover. This was in accordance with the word of the Lord to Moses and Aaron at the institution of the passover: "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you" (Exodus XII, 2), and God so timed the entrance of the children of Israel into Canaan, that they observed the passover immediately after crossing the Jordan (Joshua V, 10). The passover was celebrated on the fourteenth day of the month Abib or Nisan (Leviticus XXIII, 5), and the fifteenth day was the first day of the feast of unleavened bread. It was observed as a sabbath or "day of holy convocation." On the following day, the sixteenth of Nisan, the harvest began, and the first fruits were presented to the Lord. It was from this day that the seven weeks which led to Pentecost were reckoned.

It will thus be seen that each year was reckoned from the harvest. The command of the Lord was: "Begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn" (Deuteronomy XVI, 9). The reason for this command was evidently in order to ensure that the Jewish Calendar would not be vitiated by any artificial mode of reckoning, but would be corrected each year according to Solar time. We can, therefore, have confidence that the Jewish years were really Solar years, as in the present mode of reckoning.

We have seen that the Israelites were commanded by God to let the land have its rest every seventh year from the date of their entrance into Canaan. After seven of these cycles, forty-nine years in all, the next year, the fiftieth, was to be a special sabbath or rest year, called the **jubilee year.** Thus the forty-ninth year, and the next one, the fiftieth, were both sabbath years. In the former, the land was to have its rest, and in the fiftieth, not only was the land to have its rest, but there was to be **a restitution of all things.** What the Israelites were to do was this: When the fiftieth year came round, they were to blow a silver trumpet throughout the land; and that was to be the signal that every man was to have his rightful possessions, the possessions of his forefathers, restored to him. In Leviticus XXV, 8-10, we read: "And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his family."

By the time the jubilee was over, each man had his family and his original possessions restored to him. What a happy time that must have been! Soon afterwards, however, some who had greater ability or were more industrious, would begin to increase their possessions at the expense of others who were less able or industrious. In the course of time, we understand that some became very rich, and others very poor, some so poor, that in order to pay their debts and live, they were obliged to sell their children one by one into slavery, then their wives, and finally themselves. Shortly after that came the next jubilee when there was a restitution of all things. Each slave regained his freedom. His debts were cancelled, his wife and family and all his original possessions were restored to him.

What a happy time that must have been when his wife and his children were gathered together with him in the old homestead! What a happy year for the slaves, for the debtors, for the poor! But what a trying time it must have been for the rich; for those who had inherited or acquired wealth, and were living in luxury on the fruit of their or their fathers' labours! Doubtless, while the poor were demanding what God had originally given to them or to their forefathers, the rich must have endeavoured to cling to what they had, and, as a consequence, there must have been much angry disputing, and many of these disputes must have had to be settled at court.

We may be sure the poor would be crying out: "We are all

brethren, rich and poor alike, for are we not all the children of Abraham? This year we are all free men, there are no slaves among us, and not only so, but we are all equal; there is nobody better than another. Liberty! Equality! Fraternity!" Another cry must have been:—"The land for the people! The land belongs to God and he has given it to us all! No man has a right to it more than any other!" The rich on the other hand must have clung to what they had, saying:—"No, we will not give up our hard-earned possessions." Trouble would be sure to follow, for the poor would demand their rights, and the rich would be obliged to disgorge their surplus. Those of the people, however, both rich and poor, who were pure in heart, would see that God's way was best, and eventually all would be satisfied more or less.

We see, then, that the jubilee year was a time of restitution. It must have meant something. What did it typify? We are told in the third chapter of Acts that there will be **"Times of Restitution" when Christ returns**—"And he (Jehovah) shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive (retain) until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (verses 20, 21). From this passage it is clear that the Lord set apart these jubilee years to be observed by the children of Israel, the children of Abraham, in order to typify the time when all things are to be restored to man as at the first.

WHEN ARE THE ANTITYPICAL TIMES OF RESTITUTION DUE TO BEGIN?

To reckon this, we must commence at the year 1575 B.C, when the Israelites entered the land of Canaan,—Leviticus XXV, 1-4—"And the Lord spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the Lord. Six years shalt thou sow thy field . . . but the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land." After they had conquered the land, each tribe and each family were given certain possessions. Gradually these were lost by some and gained by others, until the fiftieth year came round, and then everything was restored as we have already described:—"And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you: and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family" (Leviticus XXV, 10). During the next fifty years, the same thing happened, everything got topsy-turvy again, until at the second jubilee, a second restitution of all things took place.

In spite of their continued iniquity God was longsuffering with the Israelites. Again and again it seems as if he would require to cause their overthrow, but it was not until 606 B.C. that he permitted the Gentiles to remove their crown, and hold universal empire over the world. The land of Canaan was made desolate and was left in this condition for seventy years, during which, of course, a jubilee year passed unobserved.

Jesus said: "Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew V, 18). In other words, each of the types contained in the law was to continue until the corresponding Antitype came. Accordingly, after the type had ceased owing to the seventy years of desolation, we may be certain that it was **never thereafter observed by the Israelites or recognized by God.** From 1575 to 606 B.C. is a period of 969 years. If we divide this by the number fifty, it will be demonstrated that nineteen typical jubilees must have been partially observed, and that the last one was in the year 626 B.C. As the jubilee was appointed to begin in the seventh month of the year (Leviticus XXV, 9), it follows that **the last typical jubilee must have commenced in October 627** and **have ended In October 626 B.C.**

But we have already seen that Christ was not due to return for the purpose of bringing about the Restitution of all things lost by Adam until October 1874 A.D. How can this be? Does it not seem as if Christ's words in Matthew V, 18, did not come true so far as this type, at least, was concerned? No, dear Brethren, Christ's words do apply to it, for **the "cycle" was a type as well as the jubilee.** In other words, there is an Antitypical Cycle, as well as an Antitypical Jubilee; and this Antitypical Cycle began in October 626 B.C., the termination of the last typical jubilee year. The typical cycles were periods of forty-nine years, the Antitypical Cycle lasted fifty times fifty —2500 years. 626¼ deducted from 2500 leaves 1874¾, *i.e.*, October 1875 A.D. The year 1875 A.D., therefore, is the date which marks the beginning of the great Antitypical Jubilee.

Two or three questions arise here:

Why do we reckon the Antitypical Cycle as fifty times fifty, and not forty-nine times forty-nine? We do so because the mode of reckoning the typical cycles shows us that this is the correct method. In his instructions regarding the reckoning of the sabbaths, God commanded the Israelites to count a cycle of six years, and to observe the seventh year as the sabbath year. The larger cycle for the jubilee, however, was not to be six times six, but seven times seven. That is to say, the seventh or sabbath year was added to the smaller cycle when reckoning the larger cycle. It is clear, then, that God intended the Law to teach us that the fiftieth or jubilee year should be added to the typical cycle when reckoning the Antitypical Cycle, that is, that the Antitypical Cycle should embrace not forty-nine times forty-nine, but fifty times fifty, or 2500 years.

We have seen that this Antitypical cycle brings us to October 1875 A.D. All the prophecies, however, point to October 1874 A.D. as the date of the return of our Lord, and therefore as the beginning of the Antitypical Times of Restitution. This means that the year October 1874 to October 1875 was the last year of the Antitypical Cycle, and the first year of the Antitypical Jubilee. **Why should there be an overlapping of a year here?** The reason is, that if the typical cycles with their jubilees had continued throughout the "Times of the Gentiles," this year, 1875 A.D., would have been a jubilee year. The Israelites entered Canaan in 1575 B.C. and began to count the first cycle in that year. It follows that the first jubilee must have been the year 1526 B.C., and that the second cycle must have begun to count in the year 1525 B.C. Therefore, the jubilees must have been the years '76 and '26 in each century before Christ. Had the typical jubilees continued, the last one before the Christian era would have been the year 26 B.C., and the next cycle would have begun to count in the year 25 B.C. This would have meant that from the date of the birth of Christ onwards, the typical jubilees would have occurred in the years '25 and '75 of each century. The year 1875 A.D. (from October 1874 to October 1875) would, therefore, have been a jubilee year, but, unlike the previous jubilees, it would have been the Antitype, or rather, the first year of the Antitype, as the Antitype is always on a greater scale than the type.

This is as it would have been had the Israelites been faithful in their observance of the Law. But they were not faithful, and so God destroyed Jerusalem and laid the holy land desolate for seventy years, in order to indicate that in view of their disobedience he would force them to observe seventy jubilees, so far as the sabbath or rest to the land was concerned, and seventy cycles of forty-nine years each.

In II Chronicles XXXVI, 11-21 we read: "Zedekiah . . . reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the Lord. Moreover all the chief of the priests, and all the people

transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes and sending; because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought on them the king of the Chaldees . . . and they burnt the house of God, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem . . . and them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the king of Persia: to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for **as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, TO FULFIL THREESCORE AND TEN YEARS."**

This indicates, as I have said, that in view of the failure of the Israelites to keep the Law, it was evidently the purpose of God that they should be forced to observe seventy jubilees, so far as the Sabbath or rest to the land was concerned, and seventy cycles of forty-nine years. He could not have meant seventy of the seventh-year sabbaths, because as a matter of fact, the land enjoyed considerably over a hundred of these during the period from the Israelites' entrance into Canaan till their final overthrow as a kingdom. God must, therefore, have meant the greater sabbaths or rest years, the jubilees. He knew that these would be observed by the Israelites only partially, for we read in Leviticus XXVI, 27, 33-35—"And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me, I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate, it shall rest; **because it did not rest in your sabbaths,** when ye dwelt in it." After nineteen of these had been thus imperfectly observed, God laid waste the land, so that it could enjoy fully the whole seventy of them, not only the fifty-one which had not been kept at all, but also the nineteen which had not been fully observed. He could not regard these nineteen jubilees as having been observed, except in so far as they served the purpose of being **types** of the Greater Jubilee to come.

Prophecy is an account of things as they actually take place, therefore, in order to ascertain when the seventy cycles end, and the Antitypical Jubilee is due to begin, the first nineteen cycles are reckoned with the jubilee years, and the remaining fifty-one cycles without. 51 times 49 equal 2499 years. This number is one less than 2500. It follows that when we reckon from the last typical jubilee in 626 B.C., the fifty-one cycles without jubilees bring us to the date October 1874 A.D. (625¼ plus 1873¾ equal 2499). This date, October 1874 A.D., is the commencement of the great Antitypical Times of Restitution. Thus these two independent lines of reasoning give the same result.

If the "Times of Restitution" began in October 1874 A.D., how is it we do not now see everything restored? That is a very important question. You know that when the typical jubilees came round, all the Israelites' possessions, their cattle, houses, wives, and families were restored to them. The Levites, however, possessed none of the land, and took, therefore, no part in the restitution, beyond blowing the trumpets and helping the others to regain their possessions. So the "Household of Faith" have likewise no personal share in the restitution rights. They have surrendered these rights by accepting God's offer to become "first-born" ones. Their part is to proclaim the truth, symbolized by the silver trumpet, and to aid the world in regaining that which was lost to them by Adam,—communion with God; human perfection, physical, mental, and moral; dominion over the earth; life itself.

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Why do we not see everything that Adam lost restored to the world now, or at least the beginning of the Restitution of all things? To answer this question, let us consider what must have occurred during the typical jubilee. The typical jubilee lasted for a year, and it was not till the end of that year that the Israelites had all their possessions restored to them, more or less completely. But the Antitype is to last a thousand years. Accordingly, the first forty years of the Antitype would be represented by the first fortnight of the typical year.

Now, just think, what would occur during that fortnight. The silver trumpet would be blowing, telling the people that this was the time of freedom. Is the trumpet blowing now? Yes, the silver trumpet, the trumpet of Truth, is blowing. The people are getting the information that the time of liberty is nigh, that the year of God's redeemed has come. Are the people hearing the message? Yes, they are hearing the message. Away back in the typical jubilee year, the people heard the message most gladly, and repeated it from mouth to mouth. It was chiefly the oppressed that proclaimed it. The rich people at that time did not like to talk about it. They did not go out to the house-tops and proclaim that the jubilee had come. They did not want to hear the silver trumpet. But the oppressed wanted to hear it; and they passed it on from mouth to mouth. They shouted—"The day of freedom has come! Liberty! We are all children of Abraham! We are all brethren!! Fraternity! We are all equal! Equality! The rights of man! No man should be above his neighbour!" These were the cries "**Liberty! Equality! Fraternity! The land for the people!** The land belongs to God!" **It is exactly the same now.** This is the time when the people, especially the poor and oppressed, are crying out "Liberty! Equality! Fraternity! The rights of man! The land for the people!" Thus we can see that there would be no restitution of possessions during that fortnight. It would be a time rather of claiming rights and investigating claims.

But some may say "This cry of Liberty! Equality! Fraternity! began before 1874 A.D." It was in the time of the French Revolution, a little over a hundred years ago, that this began to be the cry; and even before that, there was a murmuring among the people. Do you think that the poor and oppressed in those far-back times did not open their mouths with the cry of "Liberty!" until the jubilee began? They must have talked about it, and they must even have caused a certain amount of trouble over it before the jubilee. They must have said to the wealthy "The time is near at hand when you will be compelled to give up your riches."

It would not be, however, until the trumpet began to sound, that the trouble would reach its height, and then the restitution would begin. The first evidence of this would doubtless be the freeing of the slaves, not all of them at once, perhaps, but in batches, so as not to cause hardships by freeing all before provision could be made for them. And so now, we should expect that shortly the slaves of sin and death will receive their freedom. Death and hell will give up the dead that are in them, not all at once, but in batches, as provision can be made for them. When freedom was given to some of the slaves, doubtless the first thing they must have done, was for the father to seek his children and his wife; the wife to seek her husband and her children; and when they had found one another, what a happy reunion that must have been! So it will be soon. Very soon the fond fathers and mothers and children will be reunited. All the departed ones will be gathered together again. What a happy time that will be, especially when, added to this, the original possessions lost by father Adam will be given back to them.

But as in the type it required the whole jubilee year to restore the land, and the cattle, and all the other possessions to each individual, so it will require the whole Antitypical Jubilee of a thousand years for all lost by father Adam in the beginning, to

be restored. Then, just as the Israelites after the jubilee was over, retained or lost their possessions according as they were loyal or disloyal to God and his law of righteousness, so, after the Antitypical Times of Restitution are at an end, when the Kingdom is delivered up to the Father, those who continue to be loyal to God and his law of love, will retain the possessions lost for them by the First Adam, and restored to them by the Great Mediator, the Last Adam; whereas, those who are disloyal will, like the First Adam, lose all, including life itself.

There is another point, dear friends, I should like to show you. While these jubilee years, with their cycles, typify the Antitypical Cycle and Antitypical Jubilee just described, there is a **still greater fulfilment** than that. The period of seven thousand years may, as I have already indicated, be taken as representing a "week of years," each "year" of which equals a thousand years. The Millennial Day of the Lord is the seventh or sabbath "year." In the same way, the six "days" of creation preceding God's rest will each represent a week of similar "years." The seven "weeks of years" will amount to forty-nine of these thousand-year periods. Accordingly, the next thousand-year period is the fiftieth, and we have thus **an enormous Cycle** of forty-nine years, **each "year" of which is one thousand years long,** followed by a **Jubilee which will be without end, A GRAND JUBILEE OF JUBILEES.** From this standpoint the Millennium is the Sabbath Year of the Lord, and following it is the Grand Jubilee. These are two Grand Antitypical Rest Years. What is to happen in these periods?

For the purpose of answering this question, I should like you to notice that the great seventh day, God's rest, which comprises the seven thousand years from the Fall to the year 2874 A.D., the end of the Times of Restitution, may be **divided into two equal portions,** the **"EVENING"** and the **"MORNING"** of the seventh "day." The central point is the date October 627 B.C., the end of the forty-ninth year of the last typical cycle and the beginning of the last typical jubilee year. This means that there were two rest-years, a sabbath year and the last typical jubilee year, exactly in the centre of the seven thousand years. In all the **"Evening"** period of three thousand five hundred years, there was not a single Antitype, nothing but types and shadows. The **"Morning"** period, on the other hand, is the era of Antitypes. In the beginning of it there were still some types, but the first Antitype namely, the **Antitypical Cycle,** had its start so early as the second year of the "Morning" period.

Now if we mark off the two typical years in the centre, the years 627 and 626 B.C., and note that from the end of the latter of these two years a great cycle of two thousand five hundred years is carried forward to and overlaps by one year Christ's great Day of Salvation for the world, we shall find if we count back a similar cycle of two thousand five hundred years from the beginning of the former year, that it terminates in and overlaps by one year, the First Adam's "Day"; in other words, it terminates in the year 3127 B.C., nine hundred and ninety-nine years subsequent to the Fall. **(See Chart).**

This means that we have here an exact chronological parallel. The two years of rest in the Garden of Eden are followed by the First Adam's "Day" of one thousand years; the day of condemnation for the world, the day of the loss of all things; then, overlapping one year with the First Adam's day comes a large Cycle of two thousand five hundred years. In the centre there are two typical rest-years marked off. These are followed by a second large Cycle of two thousand five hundred years which overlaps one year with the Last Adam's Day, the Day of Salvation for the world and Antitypical Times of Restitution of all things.

God so restrained Satan at the beginning, that the Fall did not occur till two rest-years had been accomplished in the Garden of Eden; and three thousand five hundred years afterwards, he so restrained the Gentile powers, that the destruction of the kingdom of Israel did not occur till the nineteenth jubilee, the last of the typical jubilees, had been observed by the Israelites exactly in the centre of his whole plan of salvation. We are reminded here of the Lord's words through the prophet Habakkuk quoted by Brother Hay yesterday,—"O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy" (III, 2). God's wrath or curse passed upon Adam and his descendents will not be removed, until by the end of the seven thousand years the last enemy, the Adamic death, will be completely destroyed. At that time the restitution of man to perfection and to communion with God will be complete. In the exact centre of this wrath period of 7000 years, God revived his work by instituting the "Morning" of Antitypes, and so in wrath he remembered mercy. In the midst of the wrath period, also, he caused his people Israel to observe the last pair of typical rest-years, and so made known to us his wondrous plan of providing two great Antitypical rest-years at the end.

Not only, however, was the wonderful and merciful work of the two great Antitypical rest-years at the end foreshadowed by these two typical rest-years in the centre of the wrath period, but it was typified also by the two rest-years in the Garden of Eden at the beginning. Let us see what happened in **the two rest-years at the beginning.** They comprised the period of innocence in the Garden of Eden, between the creation of Adam and the Fall. In the first of these years Adam was created perfect in mind and body. He had all the faculties that belong to a man, and all in perfection; the sense of sight, hearing, feeling, smell and taste, the power to reason, remember, etc.; but he had to learn how to use these faculties. That is a thing that one is very apt to overlook. We are apt to think that God made Adam and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and Adam became a living soul, and that he immediately jumped to his feet and saw everything perfectly and did everything perfectly at once. I don't think that is likely. You don't remember very well, but when you were children, you were not able to walk, you had to learn to walk. Not only that, but you had to learn to use your hands and your eyes, and all your faculties. Now you can walk, and speak and listen, etc., almost without thought; but the ability to do these things is acquired laboriously. Here is an illustration. A little over a year ago, a young man was received into an Ophthalmic Institution in Glasgow, and had two cateracts removed, one from each eye. He had been quite blind from his birth, but after the operation he was able to see. At first, however, he was able to do little more than distinguish light from darkness. He was not able to distinguish the size and shape of objects, nor judge their distance from him. He had to educate his sense of sight, which had been latent till then. When he saw an object in front of him, he had to put out his hand and walk up to it in order to learn how far it was from him, and he had to touch it in order to distinguish its exact size and shape. Adam must have required to do much the same. He must have been under the necessity of **educating his faculties,** but being perfect, he would not require a long time to do this.

In learning to use his faculties, he gradually **learnt his environment.** He learnt, for instance that such and such an object was a tree, and in what this tree differed from that tree; also that another object was an animal, and the difference between one animal and another. He soon found that one animal was swift to run his errands, another was able to lift great weights for him, and still another was beautiful to look at.

At that time, all the animals were obedient. He had "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Genesis I, 26). But very soon he began to feel a want. Though the animals were so

obedient and so helpful in many ways, there was not one in the whole creation who could admire the beautiful scenery with him, and who could talk over with him his plans for each day's work. There was no one of his own species in the world, no one with the same mental and moral qualities, made in the image of God. In a word, Adam had no real companion. God knew that this would be so, but he knew also that it was best for Adam to learn his need by experience. He sent Adam into a deep sleep, and after a short season of trouble, he presented Eve to him.

Though we can but faintly realize the degree of the mutual love of the first man and the first woman, still we can understand that while the first year was a time of rest and enjoyment and refreshment to Adam, the second year must have been a time of much greater rejoicing. In the first year he learned the use of his faculties, he learned his environment, and **he took possession of all things.** The second year was the time of his companionship with the perfect woman and was, therefore, a season of unalloyed joy.

Let us now consider **the two rest-years in the middle.** The first of these years, the forty-ninth of the last typical cycle, was a sabbath year. During that year the Israelites did no work on the land. It was a time of rest for the land, and a time of rest and refreshment for the children of Abraham, the children of God. The following year, the fiftieth, was a jubilee year, the time of the restitution of all things, and a time, therefore, of great rejoicing, especially for the poor and oppressed, and latterly for all that were pure of heart, all who feared the Lord, though at the beginning of it there must have been a time of trouble.

Both these pairs of rest-years point forward to the **GREAT ANTITYPICAL PAIR OF REST-YEARS.** We have already seen that the one thousand-year period which began in October 1874 A.D., is the forty-ninth from the beginning of the creation of the world, and the seventh from the creation of man, and that, therefore, it is a sabbath year. What will happen during this sabbath-year, the period which is generally called the Millennium? In it man will **learn the use of his faculties.** What! Has not man yet learned the use of his faculties? Not by a long way, dear friends. You may think that you are able to reason and see and hear, you may think that you know and can do many things; but now you know only in part. No one in this Age is perfect; but during the Millennial Age man will be gradually restored to the perfection lost by Adam. He will gradually get perfect faculties given to him, and learn to use these faculties; and in learning to use these faculties, he will gradually come to **learn his environment.** The whole of mankind wakened up from the grave, will begin to learn all about the plants, the animals, the rocks, the stars,—in a word, all about the universe in which we live. Above all, they will begin to **learn about the glorious character and wonderful purposes of God.** Sir Isaac Newton, just before he died, said that he felt that he had been just like a child playing with the pebbles on the shore of the great ocean of truth which lay beyond.

Thus, during the Millennial Age, (1) men will gradually acquire perfect faculties, and will learn gradually to use these faculties; (2) they will in this way begin to learn all about the universe, and God. (3) Lastly, as they learn their environment, they will gradually **take possession of the earth,** just as Adam did at first. By the end of the thousand years, all men then existing will have been restored to perfection.

Then will begin the fiftieth thousand-year period, the Grand Jubilee of Jubilees. But this Jubilee of Jubilees will not be merely a period of a thousand years. Just as in the smaller fulfilment of the typical jubilee year, the Antitypical Jubilee is not one year, but a period of one thousand years, so in this much grander fulfilment, **the Grand Jubilee of Jubilees will be not one year nor a thousand years, but ETERNITY.**

At its commencement, just as at the beginning of Adam's second year, and at the beginning of the typical jubilee, there will be a short time of trouble. It will last possibly for forty years, and will be brought about by the loosing of Satan, in order to allow the perfect man to be tested in a way not permitted by God during the course of the Millennial Age. But when the trouble ends, and all the disobedient are cut off in the second death, the obedient, those who are loyal to the Lord and to righteousness, will be called the children of God; and as such will get glorious liberty and will inherit the earth. They will go on into the Ages to follow, with great rejoicing.

One of the most important features of the rejoicing will be **the perfect communion of perfect men with God and with one another,** such as was before the Fall in the Garden of Eden, but not since. All men will then be perfect in mind, heart and body. This means that there will be no offences, no misunderstandings, no mistakes. All will love the Lord their God with all their heart, mind, soul and strength, and their neighbours as themselves. No one will any longer gratify himself at the expense of others, but all will try to do as much good as he can to everyone else, and that not for the sake of reward, but from motives of love. It is only under such conditions that there can be **perfect companionship.** People will no longer be afraid to open up their hearts to one another, but on the contrary they will delight to do so. It will be a period of unalloyed joy, and what will add greatly to the enjoyment of this delightful state of affairs will be the knowledge that **it will never end,** that God will have such confidence in all men that he will grant them eternal life with complete dominion over the earth. "There will be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, nor will there be any more pain, for the former things will have passed away" (Revelation XXI, 4).

The Flood and Baptism of Christ.

Look at the diagram once more. I want you to notice that the two great Cycles of two thousand five hundred years are divided, each of them, into two unequal parts. This division demonstrates that God has so overruled affairs that the date when the ark was ready and the Flood began, corresponds exactly to the date when our Lord Jesus was baptized in Jordan. The Apostle Peter tells us that these two stand to each other in the relation of type and Antitype; and we now learn that they were chronologically parallel. Peter says:—"When the patience of God was waiting in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were carried safely through the water. And immersion (baptism), a representation of this, now saves us" (I Peter III, 20, 21; Diaglott).

The Greek word here translated "representation" is "*antitupos,*" and should have been rendered "**Antitype.**" It is evident that the Apostle is referring to the real immersion, of which the immersion into water is only a symbol—it is the real and not the symbolic immersion that saves us. The water of baptism symbolizes the death-state. Accordingly, the destruction of the first "World of the ungodly" in water, **typified** the death-state into which "This present evil world" is passing. The ark represents the Divine plan of salvation, and Christ as the embodiment of that plan. Just as God was patient and longsuffering with the iniquity of men and angels while the ark was being prepared, so he was patient and longsuffering with the iniquity of men and angels while his glorious plan of salvation was being prepared through the Law and the prophets (Luke XXIV, 44). Again, just as the ark and the few who were it in were in the water, but were carried safely through it, so Christ and the few who are in him have been in the death-state, but are carried safely through it; for we who are saved by baptism will share in the glorious resurrection of Christ. The Lord Jesus himself, like Noah, was perfect in his generation, and was the first to be saved from death, and just as Noah became the father of this present evil world, so Jesus will become the

Everlasting Father of the world to come, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

It was in October 29 A.D., that Jesus consecrated himself unto death, in obedience to the will of his Father. He at once symbolized this consecration by immersion in the Jordan; and when he rose out of the water, he was anointed with the Holy Spirit. Thus it was in October 29 A.D., that he became the Christ, the Anointed One, the Ark of God.

As shown in *Studies in the Scriptures,* volume II, page 42, the period from the creation of Adam till the date when the Flood was dried up, was 1656 years. There were two years of innocence in the Garden of Eden, and a year elapsed from the beginning of the Flood till it was dried up. Therefore, the period from the Fall till the date when the ark was ready and the Flood began, was 1653 years. This means that the Flood commenced 653 years after the end of the First Adam's day. But the first Cycle of 2500 years overlaps the First Adam's day by a year. Accordingly, the Flood began 654 years after the beginning of the first Cycle. The second Cycle of 2500 years had its commencement at the end of the last typical jubilee in October 626 B.C. From this date till October 29 A.D., the date of the Baptism of Jesus, was similarly a period of 654 years. 625¼ plus 28¾ equal 654. Thus it is clear that God marked off the immersion of the ark in the water chronologically as the type of the immersion of Christ, the Antitypical Ark, into death. Christ's death began at and was symbolized by his baptism.

To summarize, we see that there were two typical rest-years in the Garden of Eden. Then began the First Adam's "Day" of one thousand years, the time when sin and death came upon the human race, the day of condemnation. Next, overlapping the First Adam's day by one year, there was a period of 654 years to the Flood, then another of 1846 years, altogether a Cycle of 2500 years from and including the last year of the First Adam's day, and extending up to the two typical rest-years in the centre. Next followed a second period of 654 years ending in the Baptism of our Lord Jesus, and a second period of 1846 years, forming altogether a second Cycle of 2500 years terminating in and including the first year of the Last Adam's day, the Great Sabbath Day for which the Church has been longing during the whole Gospel Age, and for which also the whole groaning creation has been vaguely hoping, waiting, though unconsciously, for "the manifestation of the sons of God" (Romans VIII, 19).

You will notice that the Flood did not occur a year too soon or a year too late. Nor did the Baptism of Christ occur a year too soon or a year too late. So also with the date of the last typical jubilee, and all the other dates indicated in this chart. God always works on time, and he never makes a mistake. We who are living in the opening years of the Great Times of Restitution are looking forward with confidence to the year 1915 A.D. as the year when "the Kingdoms of this world will become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ," head and body (Revelation XI, 15). We know for a certainty that the events expected in that year will occur just as surely as did the events on the dates to which we have had our attention called this afternoon. The proofs for the dates in this diagram are very plain, and the proofs for 1915 A.D. are equally plain. We can therefore lift up our heads and rejoice, knowing that the time of deliverance is now very near.

WHAT THIS DIAGRAM SHOWS (No. VIII).

(1) **God's rest** or sabbath day lasts 7000 years. Presumably, therefore, each of the six "days" of creation prior to God's rest was a period of 7000 years.

(2) This period of 7000 years known as God's rest or sabbath, may also be considered as a "**week,**" each "day" of which equals a 1000 years (I Peter III, 8). From this standpoint, the **first** period of 1000 years was the **First Adam's "day"** (Genesis II, 17), the day of condemnation for the whole world, the day when all things were lost by Adam; and the **seventh** period of 1000 years is the **Last Adam's "Day,"** the sabbath day for the Church and the world, the day when all things lost by Adam will be restored, and therefore the day of salvation for the world.

(3) From this standpoint also, each of the preceding six "days" of creation may be considered as a "**week.**" The thousand-year period into which we have now entered, is the forty-ninth of the whole enormous Cycle, and the next which will be never-ending, will, accordingly, be the fiftieth, **the Grand Jubilee of Jubilees.**

(4) From this it will be seen that each of the thousand-year periods may be termed a "year" or "time." Man, during the whole of the **seven "years" or "times"** has been "void of judgment" (Romans I, 18, margin). This unsoundness of mind is evidenced chiefly by the belief that he can govern without God. He will not fully recover his reason till the end of the seven "times," when the kingdom will be delivered over to the Father. This forms one mode of interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

(5) The **typical cycles and jubilees** of the Israelites, **viewed from the standpoint of the Law,** *i.e.,* as it should have been according to the Law, pointed forward to the year 1875 A.D. as the first year of the Antitypical Times of Restitution. The last typical jubilee in 626 B.C was so timed that the Antitypical Cycle of fifty times fifty (2500) years, which began in October 626 B.C., terminated in October 1875 A.D. The Antitypical Cycle thus overlaps the Last Adam's day by one year. This is accounted for by the fact that if the typical jubilees had been continued right on during the period of the Antitypical Cycle, the year 1875, beginning in **October 1874 A.D.**, would have been a jubilee, but instead of being a typical jubilee, it would have been the **first year of the Antitypical Jubilee.**

(6) The **typical cycles and jubilees** of the Israelites, **viewed from the standpoint of prophecy,** *i.e.,* as they actually occurred, pointed forward to October 1874 A.D., as the commencement of the Antitypical Jubilee. From this standpoint, there were seventy jubilees, nineteen partially observed, fifty-one not observed at all. All seventy of these, God enforced by laying the land desolate for seventy years. The last typical jubilee which was observed, was in the year 626 B.C. The fifty-one cycles without jubilees (51 times 49 equal 2499 years) which followed, began in October 626 B.C., and ended in October 1874 A.D., which, therefore, was the beginning of the Antitypical Jubilee.

(7) When God's rest is divided into two equal parts, an **"Evening"** and a **"Morning,"** the central point is found to be October 627 B.C., the end of the forty-ninth year of the last typical cycle and the beginning of the fiftieth year of this cycle, the last typical jubilee year. The first or **"Evening"** period of 3500 years contained types and shadows, but **no Antitypes.** The second or **"Morning"** period of 3500 years, though still containing some types and shadows in the early part, is **the era of Antitypes,** the first of which, viz: the Antitypical Cycle, had its start in the second year of this period.

(8) This division of the 7000 years marks off two typical rest-years in the centre. These and also the two rest-years in the Garden of Eden, foreshadow the two **Great Antitypical rest-years** at the end.

(9) The **Antitypical Cycle of 2500 years** from the last typical jubilee to the Last Adam's day, which it overlaps by a year, is **paralleled by a similar Cycle** of 2500 years backwards from the forty-ninth year of the last typical cycle to the First Adam's day, which it overlaps by one year. These Cycles serve to mark off more prominently, not only the First and Last Adams' "days," but also the last pair of typical rest-years in the centre.

(10) Each of these Cycles is subdivided into periods of 654 and 1846 years respectively. The division marks off the **beginning of the Flood** and **the Baptism of Christ,** which according to the Apostle Peter (I Peter III, 20, 21) stand to each other in the relation of type and antitype.

Amen.

Blow ye the Trumpet, blow
The gladly solemn sound;
Let all nations know,
To earth's remotest bound,
The Jubilee of Earth is come,
Returning ransomed sinners home.

The Seventh Trumpet hear,
The news of heavenly grace;
Salvation now is near;
Seek ye the Saviour's face.
The Jubilee of Earth is come,
Returning ransomed sinners home.

A Reply to an Anglo-Israelite.

QUESTION I: "Are only the 'one hundred and forty-four thousand' ransomed?"

Answer: No. The 144,000 are those few who find the "narrow way" which leads to a special salvation, and are faithful unto death, "for God is the saviour of all men, **specially** of those that believe (during the Gospel Age, the time in which the narrow way is open)" (I Tim. 4: 10).

Question II: "What special advantage will the 144,000 have over the rest of the world who are to populate the earth during the 1000 years of the Millennial Age?"

Answer: The special advantage which the 144,000 will have over the rest of mankind is that, whereas the world is to have **restitution** blessings (restitution—a restoring of that which was lost. Adam lost perfection of **human** nature, therefore, "restitution" would mean—restoring to perfect **human** nature), the 144,000—the "little flock," get something far and beyond, the Apostle calls it great and precious promises—"whereby are given unto **us** (believers in Christ) great and precious promises, that by these **we** might be made partakers of the **Divine** Nature" (II Peter 1: 4).

There is another reason—the 144,000 Overcomers are to be like Jesus **as he is.** The Apostle says—"for when he (Jesus) shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3: 2); and as Jesus is like God (as it says in Heb. 1: 3—"Who (Jesus) being the brightness of his (God's) glory and **express image** of his person"), therefore, these 144,000 Overcomers are to be actually raised to the pre-eminence and nature which God holds;—surely a sufficiently great advantage over all other beings whom God has created or ever will create.

Note:—Of course, Jesus will always have pre-eminence in all things. He is the head of the Church which is his body; and the members of the Church could have had no existence apart from him. And in the same way, Jesus himself will always be subject to the Father, that God may be all in all—see Col. 1: 18, 19; and I Cor. 15: 27, 28.

Question III: (a) "Will any of the restored world of mankind die in the ordinary way? (b) Will they marry? (c) Will any more be born?"

Answer: (a) No. They—if they die—will not die in the **ordinary** way, for "in those days they shall say no more, The Fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the Children's teeth are set on edge (Adam, our father, ate of the sour grape of sin, therefore, not only did **he** die, but his children—the whole human race—also, as a result of **his** sin), but (then) everyone shall die for his **own** iniquity, every man that eateth the sour grape (of sin), **his** teeth shall be set on edge" (Jer. 31: 29, 30).

The Adamic condemnation under which all died, being now cancelled, if any man sins in the Age to come, he must die on his own account; and from this death there will be no awakening, "knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him," *i.e.*, a ransom was provided once, but shall not be again (Rom. 6: 9).

(b and c) No. "Do you not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God? For when they shall rise (in the resurrection) from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage" (Mark 12: 24, 25).

Question IV: "I see you claim that 'Russellism' reconciles **all** the Scriptures. I do not see how it can any more than any other 'ism.'"

(*Comment*): Neither do we think that any "ism" can reconcile all the Scriptures, but we do think that **the Scriptures reconcile themselves.** All we require to do is to **believe** what they say, and not substitute ideas of our own.

For instance,—the Scriptures say—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and ye shall be saved" (Acts 16: 31), and also—"neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts 4: 12); but it, the Scriptures, nevertheless states that **"God will have all men to be saved"** (I Tim. 2: 4). It necessarily follows that to harmonize the above, bearing in mind that only a few get the opportunity **now** of believing in the Lord Jesus in order to be saved,—**there must be a future Age** in which the opportunity will be given to all those who have not had it in this life-time. This is in entire harmony with Acts 17: 31, which says that "he (God) hath appointed a **day** in which he will **judge** the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained (Jesus); whereof he hath given **assurance** unto all, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Peter says that this "day of judgment" is to be a **thousand years long** (II Peter 3: 7, 8); and it is the privilege of those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ during **this** Age,—the Age of the narrow way,—to be associated with Jesus during that thousand-year-day period, in judging the world of mankind; for in Rev. 20: 6 we read—"blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first (or chief) resurrection, on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ; and shall **reign with him a thousand years.**" The Apostle Paul says, "Do ye not know that **the saints shall judge the world?**" (I Cor. 6: 2). It is to that day (or Age) that the following texts apply:—"When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world **will** learn righteousness" (Isa. 26: 9)—just now they are more likely to learn evil. But after they have learned righteousness, we are told in Rev. 20: 3, that "Satan will be loosed for a little season." This will be for the purpose of testing to see whether they will **remain** righteous; but if they will not, Psalm 145: 20 tells us that they shall be destroyed—"The Lord **preserveth** all them that love him, but all the wicked will he **destroy.**" All who die then will be wilfully wicked; they will sin against **knowledge,** "for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea," "and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying Know the Lord, for they shall **all** know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord" (Hab. 2: 14; Jer. 31: 34). But we are thankful to know that there will not likely be many wicked, for **to know God is to love him.**

Question V: "Have you any good reason to suppose that, when we read of the 144,000 of all the tribes of Israel, the words are not to be taken as they stand, and that those sealed ones are to be taken from all or any of the tribes of mankind; and not, as the Book clearly states, 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel?"

In other words, we understand you to mean that, in your opinion, the Book clearly states that the 144,000 are to taken from the twelve tribes of natural Israel; and that you desire us to give our reasons for thinking that they may be made up from all or any of the tribes of mankind, and not from natural Israel exclusively.

In answering this question, we think it best to split it up into various sections, so as to make it easier to comprehend; and at the same time, to anticipate and answer several questions which might naturally arise.

THE OATHBOUND COVENANT

(Heb. 6: 17).

(1) We will first of all state that we believe

The purpose for which God has elected the 144,000

is, as we shall endeavour to show, that they may be joint-heirs with Jesus Christ in ruling and blessing the world of mankind in the Millennial Age. "Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (I Cor. 6: 2.)

(2) The question might naturally arise:—

Who are those who are to bless mankind?

The Scriptures alone can lead us in answering this question; and therefore we state a few texts bearing on the subject.

The Scriptures state that they are the "seed of Abraham"—as we read in Gen. 22: 15-18—"And the Angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven and saith, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord . . . that in blessing I will bless thee and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand of the seashore . . . and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;" and the Apostle in Gal. 3: 29 says—"If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (the promise to bless all the families of the earth).

(3) We would now like to point out that the Scriptures show that:—

The 144,000 and "Christ" (the seed) are one and the same.

The word "Christ" means "Anointed"—as we read in John 1: 41—"We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ"—margin—the Anointed.

That this "Christ" refers to a company and not to one individual is shown in I Cor. 12: 12—"For as the (human) body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are (nevertheless) one body; so also is Christ" —"Christ" although one body is composed of many members.

It is said of the "Christ" that they are to be the firstfruits unto God, for we read, "of his own will begat he us (to a new nature) with the word of truth (the Bible—John 17: 17), that we (believers) should be a kind of **firstfruits** of his creatures," "for since by man (Adam) death, by man (Jesus) also the resurrection of the dead; but every man in his own order; Christ (the Anointed company) the **firstfruits**" (James 1: 18; I Cor. 15: 21, 23).

It is also said of the 144,000 that they are to be the firstfruits. "And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand . . . and they sung a new song before the throne (the song of Moses and the Lamb—Rev. 15: 3) . . . and no man could learn that song but the hundred forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth . . . These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth (walking in his footsteps of self-sacrifice unto death—Matt. 16: 24). These were redeemed from among men being the **firstfruits** unto God and to the Lamb" (Rev. 14: 1-4).

Thus the Scriptures inform us that it is the "Seed" of Abraham which is to bless all the families of the earth; that this seed is Christ, Jesus Christ the head, and the Church the members of his body; and that the 144,000 and "Christ" are one and the same.

Who are Christ's?

The necessary qualifications to become Christ's are:—

(a) To have **faith** in Jesus Christ; for as the Scriptures say—"that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" (Gal. 3: 22), *i.e.*—the promise (to be blessers of the nations of the earth) is given to them that believe in Jesus Christ.

(b) We must **suffer** with him, "for unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" for "if we suffer (with Jesus) we shall also reign with him" (Phil. 1: 29; II Tim. 2: 12); also in Rom. 8: 16, 17—"the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

(c) A third qualification is that we be **dead** with Christ. This would necessarily imply an understanding of what is meant by being "dead with Christ."

If we first understand that the whole human race is already "dead in Adam," as it says in Rom. 5: 12—"Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so (in consequence of this) death passed upon all men," we shall see that we can have no standing before God of ourselves. Therefore, understanding that we are already dead in Adam, the question is

How can we be dead in Christ?

God, we are told, has arranged a way in which this can be done. He has first of all provided a ransom or corresponding price to off-set the death sentence on the first man, in the person of his Son; "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (I Tim. 2: 5, 6), so that Adam and all his race are assured a resurrection by virtue of this cancellation, "for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15: 22); but he has arranged further that all who have faith in this cancellation **now**, can have the benefits accruing therefrom in advance of the rest of the world—"Therefore, being justified by faith, we (believers) have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5: 1); and these are reckoned as if they had life "for he that is dead (in Christ) is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe we shall also live with him: death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he (Jesus) died, he died unto sin once; but in that he (now) liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye (believers) also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6: 7-11). And again—"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh (in the human body), I live by the faith of the Son of God; who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2: 20). Thus we see that "when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Rom. 5: 10).

Nevertheless, we believers only get this reckoned life for a purpose—"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God (in thus reckoning you as alive), that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12: 1). We get it for the purpose of laying it down again; but with this vast difference, that in laying down our life, we do not now die under the condemnation which rests upon Adam and his race, for "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8: 1), but we die a sacrificial death along with Jesus, as we read—"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death?" (Rom. 6: 3). As the death of Jesus Christ was not at the hands of justice, but was a voluntary one, as it is written—"Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross" (Heb. 12: 2), so will the believers' death be regarded as a voluntary one, and not like the rest of mankind, at the hands of justice. As there are two kinds of death—" dead in Adam "—" dead in Christ," it would be quite proper to expect that there would be

Two Resurrections.

We believers who have complied with the above mentioned qualifications will rise in advance of the world, for "the dead in Christ shall rise first," "blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first (or chief) resurrection" (I Thess. 4: 16; Rev. 20: 6); and we shall be like Jesus "for if we be planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. 5: 6).

On the other hand, the rest of mankind who have not had this faith in Jesus Christ and following him unto death, will be raised like him (Adam) in whom they died, "The first man is of the earth earthy, the second . . . the Lord from heaven. As was the earthy (*i.e.*, Adam) such will they be also (in the resurrection) that are earthy (whose aspirations are earth-wards), and as is the heavenly (*i.e.*, our risen Lord) such will they be also that are heavenly (whose aspirations, through having been begotten by the Holy Spirit to a new nature, are heaven-wards). And as we (followers of Jesus Christ) have borne the image of the earthy (been human, earthy beings like Adam), we shall also (in the resurrection) bear the image of the heavenly" (have the Divine nature like Jesus, be made spirit beings) (I Cor. 15: 47-49).

It will thus be seen that those who would be Christ's must have these qualifications.—(1) **FAITH in Christ**; and as the result of that faith in Christ—(2) **SUFFERING with Christ**; and as the result of suffering—(3) **DEATH in Christ**. If they have these qualifications, they will be the firstfruits unto God, the 144,000 who will fulfil the promise made to Abraham in Gen. 22: 15-18.

We now come to another section of the main question, viz:—Are these 144,000 to be taken from the twelve tribes of Natural Israel, or are we justified in saying that they may be made up from any or all the tribes of earth?

WHAT IS AN ISRAELITE?

The word itself means "Prince or Soldier of God" (Gen. 32: 28, margin). Therefore an Israelite must be one who is in harmony with God.

The Jews made the mistake of thinking that they were Israelites, the seed of Abraham, and therefore heirs of the promise, because they were the natural descendants of Abraham; but the Apostle Paul shows that only those who have the **faith** of Abraham are accounted the seed of Abraham. "For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness, that he might be the father of **all** them that **believe** though they be not circumcised (though they may not be Jews by natural descent), that righteousness might be imputed to them also. For the promise (to bless all the families of the earth) was not to Abraham or his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith" (Rom. 4: 9-13). Our Lord indicates the same thing. When urging the Jews to continue in his word that they might be his disciples indeed, they answered him "Abraham is our Father." Jesus said unto them "If ye were Abraham's children ye would do the works of Abraham (the works of faith for which Abraham was reckoned righteous); but now ye seek to kill me . . . ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it (Jesus was here no doubt referring to the devil's lie recorded in Gen. 3: 4,—compare with Gen. 2: 17). And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not." If they had had faith, and believed in Jesus' words, they would have had **God** as their Father, and been the true "seed" of Abraham, "Israelites indeed" (John 8: 39-45).

The Scriptures say that the Jew who did not keep the law was reckoned as if he were not a Jew, as if he were in fact a Gentile, a heathen, for we read in Rom. 4: 12-14 that Abraham is the "father of circumcision (of Jews) to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also (in addition to being Jews) walk in the steps of that **faith** of their father Abraham which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham or his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect." We see, then, that those who have no faith gain nothing by being Jews, being of the circumcision, "for circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision" (*i.e.*, he is really a Gentile); "for he is not a Jew who is one outwardly," "therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law . . . seeing it is the one God which shall justify the circumcision (the natural Jew) by faith, and the uncircumcision (the Gentiles) through faith" (Rom. 2: 25, 28; 3: 28, 30). It is quite evident, therefore, that there is a distinction between:—

Real Israel and Nominal Israel.

"For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly: neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he **is** a Jew (in God's sight) which is one inwardly: and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter (not because he is a subscriber to the customs of the Jewish nation); whose praise is not of men but of God." "For they are not all Israel (in the sight of God) which are of (natural) Israel: neither because they are the (natural) seed of Abraham, are they all children . . . that is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Rom. 2: 28, 29; 9: 6-8).

Our Lord at the beginning of his ministry at the end of the Jewish Age, recognized this distinction, for we read that when he saw "Nathanael coming to him, he saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile" (John 1: 47).

As the Scriptures show clearly that all those who were Israelites indeed must have had faith in God "for without faith it is impossible to please him" (Heb. 11: 6), does it therefore follow that all those faithful ones will be included in the 144,000? As we have already shown that the 144,000 and the "Christ" are one and the same, the question is:—

Will all those who have been faithful under the law be In Christ?

No, for we are told that the law was added to the promise made to Abraham "**till** the seed should come to whom the promise was made," and that "the promise by faith of Christ Jesus might be given to them that believe (in Christ Jesus)" (Gal. 3: 19, 22).

"To Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3: 16, 29). "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation: which **at the first** began to be spoken by the Lord (Jesus)" (Heb. 2: 3), "of which salvation the prophets (of old) have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto **you** (Christ's); searching what . . . the spirit which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ (head and body), and the glory (of the Divine nature, etc.) that should follow. Unto whom (the prophets) it was revealed (made plain) that **not** unto themselves, **but unto us** (the followers of Jesus Christ) they did minister the things, which are **now** reported unto you" (I Pet. 1: 10-12).

It will be quite evident from a consideration of these texts that those who were faithful under the law will not be in "Christ,"

will not be of the "Anointed" company, for as the Apostle says "before faith came we were kept under the law, shut up unto (kept in restraint up till) **the** faith which should **afterwards** be revealed" (Gal 3: 23), a special faith—"faith of Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3: 22). Only since their "Head" (Jesus) was anointed can any become members of his anointed body, for "he is the head of the body, the church" (Col. 1: 18). Therefore it will be seen that the faithful ones who preceded Jesus Christ could not have been "in Christ," and so could not have been "dead in Christ," but must have been "dead in Adam," and will in the resurrection be like him (Adam) in whom they died, *i.e.*, human beings.

But the rest of the world are also to be raised as human beings, therefore:—

What advantage have the faithful who preceded Christ?

There will be this difference between them and the world. The world will be raised to judgment, or trial, and will be tested to see whether they will be worthy of life, whereas the faithful will be raised perfect, their judgment or trial for life being past, for we read "that all in the grave shall . . . come forth; they that have done good (all the faithful) unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil (the rest of the world) unto the resurrection of judgment" (John 5: 29, R.V.).

The Apostle when enumerating the trials which some of these "Ancient Worthies" had to undergo, said that they endured them "not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a **better** resurrection (than the rest of the world)" (Heb. 11: 35).

Those who partake of the "resurrection unto life" will be of two classes. The "dead in Christ" will have the precedence in all things, being the "firstfruits," and it will be through their instrumentality that the other class (as well as the world) will be raised to life. The Apostle, after drawing our attention to a number of these "Ancient Worthies," says: "and these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promises: (owing to) God having provided some **better** thing for us (the Anointed company), that they should not be made perfect without us" (Heb. 11: 39, 40); and the words of our Lord in Matt. 11: 11 clearly show that his **followers** will be greater than any who preceded them "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist (not even Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon, and all the holy prophets): notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." The least in the kingdom will be a spirit being, whereas John the Baptist, who was the last of the prophets, died before the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, which marked the inauguration of the kingdom class immediately after the death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord. "The law and the prophets were until John: **since** that time the kingdom of God is preached" (Luke 16: 16).

Certainly, the preaching of the kingdom during our Lord's ministry was confined to the nation of Israel, for when Jesus "had called unto him his twelve disciples . . . these twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans.enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 10: 1, 5-7). It was God's purpose that the Jewish nation should get the first opportunity to become members of Christ's "body;" but because of their unbelief they were cast off with the exception of "a remnant according to the election of grace," for "though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved" with this "great salvation" (Rom. 11: 5; 9: 27), and the Gentiles were then given this opportunity.

We read that Paul and Barnabas when preaching on one occasion to a large multitude, were contradicted by the Jews, and that they "waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should **first** have been spoken to you (the Jews); but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourself unworthy of eternal life (to which the word of God would have begotten them, had they accepted the truth in the love of it—Jas. 1: 18), lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13: 46). We now come to the answer to the main question:—

Are the 144,000 made up from all the tribes of earth?

It will have been gathered from what has already been said, that this company will be made up from all the tribes of earth, Jew and Gentile alike.

If at the time of our Lord's first advent there had been a sufficient number from among the Jewish nation to have fulfilled the necessary qualifications to enable them to become Christ's and make up the full 144,000, no doubt the call would never have gone forth to the Gentiles. The Jews had the **exclusive** right to become joint heirs with Jesus Christ, for Paul speaks of them as "My brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites: to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, whose were the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came," for "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law (made subject to the law, in order) to redeem them that were under the law, that we (Jews) might receive the adoption of sons" (Rom. 9: 3-5; Gal. 4: 4, 5). But when "he (Jesus) came to his own, his own received him not. But (nevertheless) as many as received him, to them gave he power (or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which (consequently) were begotten (to the new nature), not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1: 11-13). Those who received Jesus were few, for "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the **election** hath obtained it, and the **rest** were blinded" (Rom. 11: 7). There were not sufficient from among the Jews to make up the requisite number, and therefore God "did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name" to become the bride of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Acts 15: 14).

The Jews were not, however, excluded from all hope of becoming Christ's, but thenceforth "there is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him" (Rom. 10: 12). Since the exclusive favour to Israel ceased, all have had an equal opportunity to run for the prize of the high-calling in Christ Jesus; as the Apostle says, speaking to the Gentiles, "Ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision, . . . at that time were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, . . . but now in Christ . . . are made nigh by the blood of Christ, . . . who hath made both (Jew and Gentile) one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us" (Eph. 3: 11-14). Therefore, God has elected to "make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he hath afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called (unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus—I Pet. 5: 10), not of the Jews only, but **also** of the Gentiles" (Rom. 9: 23, 24).

Those who properly can claim the name "Israelite."

It is not that the Jews who believed in Jesus Christ were reckoned as being equal with the Gentiles, but rather that the unbelieving Jews were looked upon by God as Gentiles; and the believing Gentiles were now reckoned as being Israelites. The Apostle, quoting the prophet Hosea, says—"I will call them my people (call them "Israelites," for "O children of Israel . . . you **only** have I known of all the families of the earth"—Amos 3: 1, 2), which were not my people (but were formerly Gentiles)" (Rom. 9: 25).

The Apostle likens the "Oath-bound Covenant" to a good olive tree; Jesus Christ being the "root," and the members of his body the "branches;" and he says—"I speak unto you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: if by any means I may provoke them to emulation which are my flesh, and might save some of them (with the great salvation). . . . If some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them . . . Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith; and they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again" (Rom. 11: 13, 14, 17, 20, 23).

The Apostle sums up the whole matter when he says—"In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a **NEW CREATURE.** And as many as walk according to this rule (whether formerly natural Jews or Gentiles), peace be on them, and mercy, and upon **THE ISRAEL OF GOD**" (Gal. 6: 15, 16). The Apostle here shows that **the** Israel of God are those who have been begotten to a new nature. In the resurrection, they will be spirit beings, new creatures. "And they sang a new song ('and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand'—Rev. 14: 3), saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and has redeemed us unto God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and nation; and hast made us (the 144,000) unto God kings and priests; and we shall reign on earth (and bless all the families of the world)" (Rev. 5: 9, 10).

We trust that we have sufficiently proved from the Scriptures that the 144,000 are to be taken from all the tribes of mankind, and that they will be spoken of by God as being—

"12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel."